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# MARRIAGE

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BY

ERNEST R. GROVES

PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA



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*To*

ARTHUR H. WILDE

who as Dean of the School of Education authorized at Boston University the first college course in preparation for family-life

AND

HARRY W. CHASE

during whose presidency at the University of North Carolina was offered the first college course in preparation for marriage.

10/5/2004  
10/5/2004



## PREFACE

This is a text on marriage; as far as I am able to discover, the first ever written. It is not a book on the family although marriage and the family are so intertwined that a discussion of the former involves from time to time reference to the latter. The book is a text and necessarily accepts the limitations imposed by this form of presentation. It is also a text with a definite purpose. It is not primarily concerned with social changes influencing marriage or with matrimonial discontent and failure. It attempts rather to interpret marriage as a human experience in such a way as to bring to the student insight and a familiarity with the resources that science has given for dealing with marriage problems.

The book is a result of the conviction that not only is there great need of renewing the one-time social practice of training young people for marriage but that we have at present sufficient information emerging from the various fields of science that have to do with human behavior to justify the serious study of marriage by college men and women. From every quarter the demand is insistent that preparation be given those entering marriage, and it is generally realized among educators that the past *laissez faire* attitude cannot persist. Experiments leading to preparation for marriage, family life, and parenthood are going forward in schools, colleges, universities, churches, and various agencies for adult education. It is apparent that a definite responsibility for the developing of preparation for marriage rests upon the colleges and that the time has come when no institution of higher learning can fully meet its social obligations without including education for marriage.

During the last eight years a course on marriage has been offered senior men at the University of North Carolina. It is interesting to know that it originated at the request of the men themselves, who appointed a committee to ask the President, Harry W. Chase, to provide training for marriage. President Chase's interpretation of the meaning of adequate education for modern life was in full accord with the desires of the students, and an elective course, dealing with all the

phases of marriage, open to seniors, and to juniors entering professional schools, was offered and has been given continuously since that time. The course has not been a series of popular lectures but a serious study of marriage in all its aspects. The content of the course has not only reflected the needs and desires expressed by the students year by year but also the reactions and suggestions of those who have taken it and have later married.

If it were within the power of parents and teachers to retard sex maturity until the individual was both economically and biologically prepared to marry, there would be less need of a college course attempting to anticipate domestic experience. Nature, however, has given us no choice and there is no possible barrier to sex interest which any educational organization can erect for the shelter of its youth. The policy that attempts this is incompatible with the prevailing conditions of modern life and merely means surrendering the opportunity for constructive wholesome instruction, leaving the young man and woman to draw information from those who, however sophisticated and confident, are fundamentally as ignorant as their pupils.

It is folly to attempt adequately to train young people for life adjustment while offering them no opportunity to gain insight into the meaning of the domestic experience upon which they stake so much of their happiness. Although sex cannot be ignored in such a discussion without receiving the contempt of college youth, both men and women, this text does not conceive domestic adjustment as merely sex adjustment.

Any discussion of matrimony provides unexcelled opportunity for propaganda and emotional appeal. I know from past experience that my unwillingness to become partisan in my treatment of birth control, divorce, and other controversies related to marriage will bring protest from the extremist on both sides of such questions, but the text form of presentation leaves no choice. Whatever my personal opinions, I feel the obligation of presenting as fairly as possible both sides of such matters of controversy. I take it for granted, because of former criticisms, that both sets of contending propagandists will accuse me of overstating their opponent's position. This is a very human reaction whenever emotion takes possession of an advocate. The student is introduced to the literature dealing with such subjects and invited to read, think, and decide for himself.

Even in discussing matters that are not at present controversial, an

attempt has been made to impress upon the student the rapidity with which new knowledge is appearing and the tentative character of many of our present ideas relating to marriage adjustment. Any one who has become familiar with the literature concerned with marriage and sex problems realizes how recent and how faint and elementary has been the attempt of science to understand these supremely important phases of human experience.

No reader can be more conscious of the pioneering character of such a book as this than I am and of the difficulty of deciding what material to include, how to treat certain problems and what emphasis to give them. This is said with the motive not of protecting from criticism but to assure the sympathetic reader that I fully realize the dangers that have beset my pathway. I have especially attempted to keep from any stress on morbid experience, tempting as this is as means of emphasis, and not to stray into the many interesting fields of discussion of matters indirectly related to marriage. I have tried to keep in mind the age-level and the purposes of those for whom the book is written.

I wish to make the following acknowledgments: First of all, the Institute for Research in Social Science has made available over a period of years valuable assistance and facilities both for gathering the materials of the book and for completing the manuscript. I also especially wish to thank the following for help in the preparation of this book. Howard W. Odum, editor of this series and Director of the Institute for Research in Social Science; Lee M. Brooks and Katharine Jocher, colleagues at the University of North Carolina; Phyllis Blanchard, Psychologist of the All Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic; Gladys Hoagland Groves, my wife; Ola Maie Foushee, of the staff of the Institute for Research in Social Science; Agnes E. Harris, of the University of Alabama; Jessie W. Harris, of the University of Tennessee; Joseph K. Folsom, of Vassar College; Meyer Nimkoff, of Bucknell University; Dean C. F. Jackson, of the University of New Hampshire, head of the Department of Zoölogy, who read Chapter IV of the manuscript; William Copperidge, M.D., of Durham, N. C., who read Chapter XXVI; and R. A. Ross, M.D., of Durham, N. C., Frank Howard Richardson, M.D., of Brooklyn, N. Y., Mary P. Snook, M.D., of Chesterfield, Mass., and Eva F. Dodge, M.D., of Winston-Salem, N. C., who read Chapters XXIII, XXIV, and XXV; and Fred B.

McCall, of the Law School of the University of North Carolina, who read Chapters X, XI, and XII.

There are many other persons whose assistance in preparing this book should be acknowledged. The help of some is made apparent by frequent quotations and references. There is also a sizable group of individuals who have by conference and correspondence contributed to this book. Many of them must remain anonymous, as is their wish. I especially appreciate the privilege of using the life experience of many of these men and women for purposes of illustration. None of this is presented in the form of complete case histories; it is incorporated merely to emphasize and clarify the discussion of the text. In order to prevent this book from outrunning the length feasible for a text it has been found necessary to use only a portion of the illustrative material originally selected for inclusion. For the purpose of maintaining anonymity, initials, places and sometimes other non-essential details have been changed.

I am also under obligation to men and women who have given me valuable information regarding the problems of both the married and the unmarried but whose experiences, for reasons they will best appreciate, I am not free, even in anonymous form, to publish.

E. R. G.

*Chapel Hill,  
October, 1932.*

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## MARRIAGE



## CHAPTER I

### SOCIAL CHANGES INFLUENCING MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY <sup>1</sup>

Nothing in American life is attracting more attention than recent changes in marriage and family relationships. So much is happening that no one familiar with prevailing conditions can fail to see that the family, long supposed to be the best anchored of all social institutions, appears at last to have broken from its moorings. These changes are not consistently moving in any one direction. Critics of the orthodox family life of the recent past are heartened by the family disorganization, believing that it is high time that the most traditional of social institutions should readjust to modern life, while many of those who have thought of the home as the most stable and satisfying of all human relationships are either bewildered or terrified. Apparently, these changes in family mores that are producing such varied reactions in observers are just beginning and their goal is so far in the distance that any one according to his hope or fear may prophesy the future outcome.

To understand the predicament of the family, it is necessary to remember that it both originates social influences and reflects social conditions. We have been justified in thinking of it as the primary social institution, because of the power it has over its members. This power to mold character has been so persistent that we have thought of the family as socially most important and most stable. In the form and the quality of its relationship, however, the family has not only been changeable but even in the most uniform community it has been a mere abstraction. Actually, there has been not "the family" but "families" with great differences in character and value. The time has come when the variations in the way of living in our modern world reflected back into the home have made such changes that even the structure of family life appears insecure and the power of the

<sup>1</sup> A part of this chapter has appeared in *Religious Education*, and I thank the editor for the privilege of including it in this book.

home to mold character, clearly lessened, is, by those sensitive to its failures, indicted as socially inefficient.

Social changes do not advance at all points simultaneously and the family because of its privacy and sentiment is the most resisting of our social organizations. It, however, cannot keep aloof from life, and eventually it has to change, not only because the general social situation is different, but also because its members, husband, wife, and child, are played upon by social situations outside the home, leading eventually to strain, division and readjustment within the family circle itself. The very fact that the family tends to protect itself by tradition and by a special intimacy not found in other associations permits it to lag behind in necessary adaptations that a constantly changing social life demands. As a consequence, a period of extremely rapid social changes in manner of life brings the family to an ordeal such as it is now experiencing when new adjustment is forced upon it and its attempt at adaptation suggests a revolution.

The position that the American family now finds itself in may be felt vividly if the home is pictured as if it were a manufacturing plant that had enjoyed for a long time a profitable market to which it supplied goods made by a well-defined process, but which now finds itself obliged to contend for the opportunity to sell while at the same time forced to change radically the procedure of manufacturing. In simple terms, the family, content in the past to follow tradition and perform its social service by a well-established routine, is now required to make a fresh adaptation to individual and social needs and to justify itself either by catering to those who come to it demanding only the satisfaction of personal pleasure, or by contributing values that enrich the character of the individuals who form the family and society itself.

When we uncover American family life, we find it rapidly changing under the pressure of prevailing social conditions. We see also that it is in transition, although only a dogmatist would dare to insist upon the direction in which it is moving. As one would expect under the circumstances, experiments of various sorts are being carried through with both high and low motives by those who claim they know a better way to handle the problems that have fallen upon the family than by the type of organization which is still orthodox. Married couples, parents and children are meanwhile restless, discontented and skeptical to a degree that forces attention.



**Changes in motives.** In the past it has been a great advantage to the family to have had a definite economic motive. For the most part, in every period and section of American life it has been an advantage economically both to the man and the woman to marry. Of course, there have always been individual exceptions, but the general fact has been so impressive that the financial advantage of marriage has been taken as a matter of course. As has so many times been pointed out, this economic appeal of marriage exists no longer for a considerable number of people, especially those living in cities. In many cases the direct reverse has come about and those who have contemplated matrimony have had to face the fact that marriage would lessen their income or at least bring part of it under hazard. Instead, therefore, of the former question, "Can I afford not to marry?" the modern version has become "Dare we marry and accept the economic risk that comes with matrimony?"

An institution that is based upon financial advantage accompanied by a well-defined division of labor is well supported as compared with a marriage that lessens economic security and does not allow the housekeeping activities to be the sole vocation of the woman without often risking either the standards of living of husband and wife or the contentment of the woman whose interest has been developed along other lines than those of homemaking. It is indeed a radical change when marriage grows more and more a financial luxury rather than a necessity for large classes of our urban population.

Another important motive for marriage has been sex. Sex has had so large a place that many would be content to think only of this incentive to marry and regard the family as chiefly the product of society's regulation of the sex cravings of men and women. In any case, there can be no dispute that sex has been built into the family which has at the same time been strengthened by its economic function. No one is so ignorant of past human experience as to suppose that sex has always been kept within the family circle. For man, at least, there has been much social tolerance when sex has been carried outside the family. The rôle that prostitution has played, although it does not justify Lecky's famous statement that it has been the security of the monogamous family, reveals the ease with which sex can be detached from the family and the readiness that exists on the part of some men to make it a temporary pleasurable experience devoid of all idea of mutual affection.

It would be surprising if in the present situation there were no effort by those who once would have been driven primarily by their sex impulse toward matrimony to find ways of satisfaction that do not involve commitment to a permanent relationship or any substantial social obligation. Thus sex, also, provides for some a lessened motive for entering marriage.

With the decrease of the economic and sex motives for marriage, the significance of affection becomes more prominent and there are those who prophesy that it will become the dominant urge of marriage. To some this special love-companionship seems a fragile basis for marriage, since they think of it as an achievement that comes only to those especially favored in their preparation for life. It is true that affection does require character, but there is nothing regarding human nature more clearly proved by the facts of everyday life than the widespread strength of love. In all classes, in all ranges of intellectual training, affection is found and there are few who would deny that where it is present it furnishes the supreme incentive for a life partnership. The emergence of affection as a motive for marriage is hampered by the ease with which physical passion can counterfeit the more enduring attitude. Often these passion-alliances have at the beginning the rudiments of affection, but progress in love, on account of meagerness of character, does not follow and the physical attraction by itself cannot meet the test of time.

If affection comes to be the common motive for modern marriage, the family could hardly have a better support, but greater demands will be made upon individual character than was necessary, for example, when economic reasons led irresistibly toward marriage. Society cannot conceive of marriage as issuing out of affection without at the same time recognizing that where there is no love there cannot be a genuine family.

**Changes in the amount of family life.** There are changes also in the quantity of family life. It has been a masculine prerogative for a long time to make the family a mere portion and often a minor part of a man's existence. It was the woman who was told that her place was in the home and with this tradition went the idea that she should very largely submerge herself there for what was supposed to be the interest of the husband and children.

Although modern conditions have given men greater freedom and somewhat lessened the importance of family life for them, it is the



woman primarily who has been influenced by the new conditions. The variations are great, and equally different are the attitudes of individual women. It is, however, given to the American woman, as never before, to decide how much housekeeping she is willing to undertake, how much homemaking she intends to practice, and, as a consequence, how much family life she will offer her husband. Even if children come, she can now, more than ever before, sidestep what once was thought of as an inevitable responsibility. If she is domestic, she may have a large family experience, which her husband, according to his inclination, may abundantly or meagerly share.

**Changes in family relationships.** There are also changes in the relationships within the family itself. Of these, the most significant is the passing in a great multitude of homes of what once was the dominance of the father and husband. There are many reasons for the decrease of the patriarchal type of family. It is contrary to the spirit of the times, which, in turn, is largely the result of the education of women. It is difficult to maintain when as a matter of fact the family is so largely in the hands of the wife, and the husband during his working day is removed from contact with the family. It is out of accord with recent legislation, which is increasingly recognizing the social equality of woman and attempting to protect the rights of the child.

It is not only the father, however, who is meeting losses. The wife and mother also finds that she cannot concentrate as once she did upon the interests of her family or the influencing of her children. Public opinion has taken a decided turn about and is pushing forward the needs of the child rather than the authority of the parent. In practice this change in family relationships is one of the most troublesome of all recent changes affecting family life. There are not a few families where the child as he approaches adolescence tyrannizes over father and mother, leading to what is well-nigh anarchy within the home.

**Changes from competition.** Monogamous marriage is meeting with a competition which promises, for the immediate future, at least, to become more severe. There are those, both men and women, who prefer celibacy to marriage. There is neither economic nor social pressure to compel them to move toward a matrimony which they do not desire. Another competition comes from the illegal sex associations of men and women which range from the most temporary rela-

tionships to a persistent comradeship which is, aside from its defiance of convention, not unlike an orthodox marriage.

Another relationship that both competes with orthodox marriage and is bound to influence its character in cases where it is practiced after marriage is the promiscuity, frankly physical in character, followed by some men and women before marriage and by a lesser number after marriage. Their doctrine that sex is a private matter they choose to carry into practice because of their confidence in the efficiency of modern contraceptive methods.

We also have what must be rightly designated as trial marriage, where the relationship, whether legalized or not, is thought of as an experiment to be carried on only so long as it works satisfactorily. In some instances this is a temporary attitude during a probation period preceding the wedding, while in others it is understood from the beginning that, in spite of the legal finality of the marriage contract, each is free to leave the other according to his will and it is expected that the partner will coöperate in the procuring of a divorce if this is desired. The increasing popularizing and the greater efficiency of contraceptive methods provide the opportunity for competing relationships to rival orthodox marriage and to force matrimony to prove its superiority by the greater satisfactions it offers. Unfortunately, marriage, although able to strengthen the union of the man and woman who in entering the orthodox alliance have accepted in good faith their social responsibilities, is not given the magic necessary to turn the badly mated into successful husbands and wives.

**Changes in social attitudes.** There are also changes in social attitudes that mean much in the practical working out of family life. There has been a decided lessening of tolerance regarding unhappy marriage conditions and bad family influences as they operate upon children. Society is less and less attempting to force through public opinion the continued living together of husbands and wives who are matrimonial failures. Likewise, it is growing more and more willing to break up homes that are clearly detrimental to the children who have been so ill-fated as to enter a miserable family life. There is also in some quarters an increasing tolerance regarding irregular and experimental relationships, even when these are distinctly sexual in character. The long-continued pressure that has been interpreted as a social conspiracy to force women to have children is most certainly

decreasing and as woman's contribution to public attitude increases it will shrink still more.

Unquestionably it is possible to exaggerate the criticism marriage is now receiving and to magnify the significance of present matrimonial discontent. Naturally it is from the group of those who find greatest difficulty in all their social adjustments that we have the strongest expression of dissatisfaction. Whether in or out of matrimony they recoil against the circumstances that appear to be the cause of their unhappiness, and even they do not expect their noisy protest to be taken too seriously. On the other hand, the fact that this expression of unrest appears so largely to come from the volatile type of personality may lead to a minimizing of the present situation. Naturally those least capable of handling the personal problems brought forward by the present transition are most vocal in their restiveness, but they are not the only sufferers.

It must be recognized also that any discussion of marriage and its problems leads to an emotionalism hardly expressed in the consideration of any other human interest. This is because it is felt by every one that he has something at stake in any questioning or defense of the institution of marriage. Interests of supreme value to the individual are tied up with the thought of marriage and the family and they cannot lightly be put aside, they mean so much for happiness. Whether held by one friendly to marriage or by one who has repudiated it, his own idea seems to each one axiomatic, not open to any debate. The attitude toward marriage taken by many is also not consistent but a conflict between opposing and strongly felt trends of thought. The sentimental reaction which is still enforced by such influences as the movies may lead to one conception of marriage while rational thinking, also supported by influences coming out of social environment, leads in the opposite direction.

**The matrimonial goal.** It must be frankly recognized that the goal of marriage is interpreted in more personal and conscious motives than was true when the relationship was more distinctly social in its function. We have been from the beginning individualistic in our fundamental reactions to life in this country and nowhere more so than in the family. The American philosophy of life and machine industry working together have brought forward the new woman who is claiming the same opportunity for individuality that man for a longer time has been insisting upon as a masculine right. Protestantism by

its emphasis upon individual conscience and responsibility has contributed also to this individualistic trend which at last is registering in the family.

The demand so frequently heard that matrimony confer happiness upon those who enter it is frequently a superficial expression of the growing conviction that marriage to be successful must fulfill the character-needs of both members of the union. Obviously happiness in this sense is something more than a means of pleasure-getting. The goal must be the well-being of both man and woman, something that cannot be had by any easy, selfish or automatic program on the part of either. It must be an achievement and one that represents growth in character.

It is significant that the two words most commonly used to describe marriage success or failure are happy and unhappy. These terms are seldom employed by adults to describe other activities or other relationships. In the vocabulary of children, however, they appear frequently and are used to express judgment regarding both minor and major satisfactions and disappointments. It throws light upon the problem of marriage to find adjectives characteristic of childhood reactions persisting and becoming the means of defining matrimonial success and failure. This fact suggests that the individual is likely to bring to the marriage relationship not only greater expectation and daydreaming than is carried to any other of his associations but that with this goes greater resistance to reconstruction of his expectations.

The word happiness as the description of the goal of matrimony is misleading or interpretative according to its definition. In so far as it signifies a general static attainment in human relationship, it conceals the real nature of the problem of matrimonial content. There cannot be any universal or unchanging type of marriage relationship toward which every person in marriage should aspire. Were this true, education for matrimony would be simple and unquestionably would never have fallen out of our educational curriculum. It is the individuality aspect of marriage which creates its hazards and at the same time has led to the neglect of instruction for matrimony. The savage in his more primitive society could with profit give definite preparation for family life along both sex and economic lines because what was expected in marriage had been standardized by convention and all that was necessary was to give instruction in the technique required. This



type of marriage program is incompatible with modern life which stimulates individualistic desire and appraisal of every relationship, but most especially of marriage.

In our time instruction in preparation for marriage must be interpretive and even corrective and not a mere giving of counsel as to how one who marries may work out his purposes. In discussing the conditions for achieving matrimonial success in all the various aspects of the relationship, attention has to be directed not only to how the individual may carry out his wishes but also to the significance that his desires have as making easy, difficult, or impossible the happiness he demands. It may not be a comfortable thought for the man or woman entering marriage that the chief hazard in his new experience may be the personality which already has come to be the source of his motives for marriage and the origin of his ideals, the achievement of which is expected to bring happy or unhappy matrimony. Yet this is the situation just as soon as success or failure is conceived in terms of happiness or unhappiness. It is not difficult to think of the other person as a determining influence and to cast blame upon him or her when the matrimonial venture ends in disaster. In spite of the temptation to think of happiness as something personally to be possessed according to the contribution made by the other member of the partnership, success in matrimony is the result of a double-rooted experience in which both husband and wife are causes and results in their mutual reactions one to the other.

Happiness as the end of marriage is also a deceptive term to the degree that it leads the man or woman to think of matrimony as something that stands outside of the changes that have become so characteristic of modern life. However much the individual may wish to build his ideal of marriage as something that stands aloof from the general current of present civilization, he has no choice. No relationship in life is more sensitive to the prevailing social situation than is marriage. As a consequence education for marriage, if it is to have any hope of utility, must be a preparation not for ideals that had become a human fixture, insensitive to general change, but a means of adapting to new circumstances. This is not different from the ordeal that has been put upon education for other purposes, but here rather more than in any other human interest there is danger of thinking of instruction as something designed to help people achieve constant and final ideals.

Happiness as the aim of marriage also misconstrues the purpose of instruction if it turns the attention away from the fact that the individual must attain success in a social situation. The marriage relationship must always present problems and challenge the judgment of the best intentioned because it is a relationship that requires the adjustment of the individual and society. Wherever we find difficulty in achieving happiness in present civilization there sooner or later appears this fundamental perplexity as to how the desires of the individual and the demands of society may be harmonized. In no other of the experiences of life is this basic problem more apparent or more decisive than in matrimony, because nowhere else is there such likelihood of stress on individual expectations. The full difficulty of this does not appear until we notice that the adjustment of husband and wife means adjustment between individuals who themselves are attempting to adjust to a constantly changing social situation. When we speak of matrimony being obliged to adapt itself to the conditions of the modern world we literally mean that the husband and wife as individuals have to adjust themselves not only to an environment in transition but each to the other as the other attempts this adaptation to a world of things and people in constant flux. If the husband and wife were unalterable personalities with consistent aims and immutable sentiments and behavior, the adjustment would only mean the harmonious relation with outside circumstances. The fact is that conditions intrude from the outside and enter persistently as causal factors in the individuality of both husband and wife and each must attempt adjustment to this other personality which never is permitted to be stationary. It is this which makes marriage the supreme test of adaptation. Fortunately the motives that lead to this attempt at compromise and harmony are generally extremely strong, for were it not so marriage success would be extraordinary and rare.

The proportion of successful marriages to the number of matrimonial alliances must be a matter of opinion. It is recognized by all students of the problems of marriage that the divorce rate does not give us an accurate measurement for marriage success or failure. A fair way of coming to one's conviction would seem to be to compare the apparent contentment or dissatisfaction of persons married and similar reactions of people in every other precise relationship. From this point of view the continued living together of so many who marry seems surprising and encouraging. One notices how difficult it is for

men and women to continue any sort of close association with either members of their own sex or of the opposite sex. Acquaintanceship, friendship, business relationship, kinship, however zestful in the beginning or as intermittent experiences, quickly lead to boredom and, if unrelieved, to dislike and eventually to hate. In spite of the impressiveness of the divorce rate and the greater matrimonial discontent, observation of the reactions of individuals when for any length of time they are thrown into constant close association creates a conviction that marriage must have a special asset or it could never survive as an ideal of human happiness.

**Complementary character of marriage.** In truth marriage does have a peculiar assistance without which matrimonial success would be nothing less than miraculous. This special value comes from the complementary character of the sexes which in successful marriage leads to a coöperative adjustment. From Plato down there has been in all serious literature relating to marriage constant reference to the complementary relationship of man and woman. Neither is complete without the other; each needs the other.

A spectacular expression of this is physical sex, but since sex is psychological as well as physical, complementary characteristics belonging to the normal man and normal woman permeate their entire personality and cry out for fulfillment in the association with another human being who will bring completeness to the life which by itself must forever remain partial. This distinction and difference of male and female which under normal circumstances leads each adult to seek the consummation of human needs in the constancy of another gives the association of marriage fundamental support unparalleled except in parental devotion to the child.

This complementary feature of sex difference provides the ground for the clashes of men and women which are often described as sex antagonism. Since man and woman are by nature's decree made complementary to each other, the completeness of each requiring the co-operation of the other, it follows that in any relationship where they do not fuse their interests, emotional opposition necessarily comes to the surface. The unity that drowns out the feeling of difference is rarely attained outside of marriage.

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## CHAPTER II

### SCIENCE AND MARRIAGE

**Science and marriage.** There is no science of marriage, nor is there likely to be in the sense that we have a science of man's body, physiology; of man's psychic life, psychology; or of man's social experience, sociology. Marriage is for men and women a special type of experience, but a minor one as compared with the major divisions of interest that provide a fundamental basis for the various sciences dealing with human experience. Marriage is not at all minor in its value to the human individual or to society at large, but it represents a relationship which cuts through the barriers of the separate sciences, requiring for its interpretation insight gathered chiefly from biology, psychology, physiology, psychiatry, and sociology. This interlacing of science always appears when we deal with a concrete human situation or a complex relationship such as marriage.

The justification of an attempt to apply science to marriage problems and to deal with domestic experience scientifically is the value that comes from this effort. It means bringing together information of importance to any one who seeks better understanding of matrimony or who desires greater insight in dealing with his own personal problems. This second motive is the one stressed in this text, which presents information gathered from the various sciences concerned, useful both in preparation for successful marriage and in meeting problems as they arise in matrimonial adjustment. In marriage, as in other human undertakings, preparation proves worth while. In no relationship is foresight more advantageous.

The present scientific interest in marriage is not confined to the utilitarian application of factual knowledge such as is the purpose of this book. The marriage experience is also studied as a special relationship which contributes knowledge of human nature of value to the various social and psychological sciences. In this list of sciences profiting from the scientific study of marriage, biology and especially physiology must be included, for the sex factor in marriage has a direct relationship to problems of health.

The most ardent advocate of an education for marriage, based upon material drawn from various sciences, is careful to avoid exaggerating the value of information. Marriage relationship offers no more opportunity for guidance by formula than do the other intimate associations of normal people. Marriage adjustment cannot be made an exact procedure in the manner of the laboratory technique of chemistry or biology. No relationships are so distinctly human, that is, so complex in character and so unique in individual peculiarities, as those that develop within the family and marriage.

From one point of view marriage offers even greater difficulties to the investigator than familiar experience, on account of the taboos that gather about the former. These prove a handicap both for the student and for the educator who attempt to make use of present-day science in helping those who are married. It would be unfair and deceptive, however, to consider traditional and arbitrary taboos the only obstacle, and to ignore the natural reticence generally felt toward discussing the deeper problems of personal adjustment in marriage.

This reluctance to bring to expression the most private and personal experiences of association differs only in degree from the common unwillingness to analyze or to rehearse in public affectionate relationship in any of its forms. The difference between our attitude toward marriage and toward friendship is not in reluctance to publicity, which both share, but rather that as a consequence of this reticence the marriage relationship suffers from lack of information which it needs. We do not usually stake so much happiness upon friendship, and never does the association of friend and friend, however ideal it may be, bring forth the concrete and complex problems of adjustment that marriage by its very nature presents. It is, of course, along the line of physical sex that these peculiarities of marriage are most impressive. Even the sex factor in marriage, however, cannot be thought of in narrow terms or dealt with as if there were no taboos, no conventions, and no reticence. Sex adjustment in its most meager definition cannot have significance for successful domestic relationships unless interpreted as a social experience that can never be merely a physical technique or a routine of habit. The building of marriage success requires the deftness of the skilled artist rather than the formulas and exact measurements so necessary to the engineer in bridge construction.

Although there is no science of marriage equal to the prescribing of

exact rules for matrimonial success, it does not follow that science has nothing of value for the newly married or for those under domestic strain. The fact that successful marriage requires mutual understanding, insight in dealing with exacting problems, and often escape from the habits of concealing feeling, the result of previous taboo, makes all the more valuable the assistance that science is prepared to give.

**Science and romance.** The newness of the scientific approach to marriage and its problems creates in some people fear that it will rob courtship and marriage of their romantic element. This apprehension is groundless since the emotional attitude, now a convention in our culture, is too well established to be shaken by any sort of intellectual activity. There is, moreover, no necessary incompatibility between the acquiring of knowledge concerning marriage and the experiencing of deep feeling when stimulated by the mating appeal. It is true in love response as elsewhere that intelligent understanding takes one out of the fairyland of the daydreamer, but this has to be done in any case if there is to be domestic reality, and the sooner it comes about the better for one's happiness. Even the painter working in the esthetic realm where creative imagination plays a decisive part finds that success depends upon familiarity with the facts of distance, substance, and form. For example, anatomy is a basic study for the portrait painter. Behind the beautiful face there must not only be a shapely, well-formed skull, but the artist must have the ability to recognize this. Unquestionably, matrimony on its highest levels of satisfaction is primarily an art, complex in character, but he practices it best who has insight.

There need not be any suspicion that the attempt to prepare for domestic experience will blunt any joy of marriage. The situation of the student who attempts to anticipate in an intelligent way the marriage relationship is like that of the traveler who before entering a foreign land for the first time tries to get all the information he can that will make his journey comfortable, his route wisely chosen, and his contact with the people fruitful. As a result of his preparation he multiplies the enjoyment and the profit of his visit.

It is well to recognize what one seeks in marriage. No one conscious of his fundamental desire wishes an excursion into a state of blind feeling which must disappear as soon as intelligence enters. Instead of a temporary emotional orgy he wants a program that can stand the test of time and yield increasing satisfaction and success.



When marriage is looked at maturely, with consciousness of the desired goal, it is clear that intelligence counts here as elsewhere in life. Even if the study of marriage antagonized emotion, the wise choice would be happiness through knowledge rather than an emotional intoxication maintained only by the excluding of facts. Fortunately, such a dilemma need not arise.

It is true that there are some men and women devoid of the possibility of affection who become intellectually interested, and sometimes morbidly interested, in various aspects of marriage, but usually they are individuals whose years have taken them out of the romantic period and whose curiosity serves as a compensation for earlier disillusion. In many instances this reaction against the feeling side of courtship and marriage is due to former unbalanced emotionalism that, in its fading away, brought the inevitable consequences of bitterness and disappointment. Usually in such cases a more reasonable attitude at the start and a better preparation for the love-relation would have done much to protect from this exaggeration of the more primitive impulses, thus giving the individual a more propitious start in matrimony.

**The development of scientific interest.** As is true of most new developments in science, the present interest in marriage and family experience has been of slow growth and if we trace it backward to its faint beginnings has a longer history than we would expect. This interest, however, has been divided, moving along various lines of science. It will help in the understanding of the present situation if one briefly traces the unfolding of this interest of the scientist in marriage and its allied problems.

Anthropology is one of the sciences in which from the first attention has been given to marriage and all the problems that gather about human mating. In the more recent development of the science this interest has had even greater emphasis. It was inevitable that from the beginning anthropology should concern itself with matrimonial and familial experiences, since in its attempt to reconstruct the early history of man it had to study the family group, the most important social unit in simple society as in our more mature culture. Family life could not be understood apart from the social position of the sexes, the taboos, the regulations, and the traditions that determined the status of men, women, and children and defined the marriage relationship.

One of the earliest expressions of this interest of anthropology in marriage and the family was the attempt to discover the original form of marriage. After much discussion and investigation, science has come to the general opinion that the form of human mating has been chiefly influenced by the social situation, especially by economic conditions, and that no one form of marriage, polygamy, polyandry, or monogamy, was everywhere the first type. This consensus of opinion that marriage was from the start a social status reflecting the conditions under which the individual tribe of people lived has importance for the scientific approach to marriage in that it reveals the sensitiveness of the domestic relationship to the prevailing culture at any time and place.

Very recently new insight has been thrown upon the development of the love impulse, which lays bare the complexity of present attitudes and the long-time development which has brought forth the complex consolidation of the mating and the reproductive impulses, once perhaps, as original instincts, more hostile than coöperative. The monumental contribution of Robert Briffault in *The Mothers* is an impressive example of this recent trend in anthropological thought. Previously Westermarck had brought together a great quantity of material illustrative of primitive man's matrimonial experiences. In his interpretation of this the author committed himself to the thesis that monogamy was always the first and normal form of marriage, feeling apparently that our present conventional standard needed reinforcement from preliterate experience. Earlier still Herbert Spencer had been zealous in the effort to gather from all quarters of the earth information concerning the forms and conditions of marriage and the family among savage people. Unquestionably, the influence of Herbert Spencer appeared in the awakening of a new interest in the evolution of marriage. The more important writers and investigators of the nineteenth century were Sir Henry Maine, J. J. Bachofen, J. F. McLennan, L. H. Morgan, Herbert Spencer, Sir J. Lubbock, Edward Westermarck, E. B. Tylor, W. H. R. Rivers, Baldwin Spencer, and F. J. Gillen. The last three are representative of a large group of investigators who, by studying specific primitive groups, made permanent contributions to the literature that concerns the student of marriage. More recently similar contributions have been made by Bronislaw Malinowski, Margaret Mead, Franz Boas, Robert H. Lowie, and Clark Wissler.

**Psychology.** The science of psychology has not given to the problems of marriage an attention comparable to that of anthropology. It has not, however, been destitute of interest. For the most part its contribution thus far has come from the investigation of such topics as the differences between the sexes, the characteristics of adolescents, and the conditioning during childhood which issues in sex habits, all indirectly related to problems of marriage.

Since Sigmund Freud began the publishing of his psychiatric interpretation, psychology has taken a more serious interest in problems of sex. Perhaps the nearest approach at present to a psychology of the family is Flügel's psychoanalytic study. This discusses interrelationships of parent and child and of brothers and sisters. Since this interpretation is committed wholeheartedly to the Freudian thesis, it exaggerates the significance of sex. Another book of value, representing a very different line of approach, is Abraham Myerson's *The Nervous Housewife*. Among those who have written recently on psychological problems of marriage are Floyd Allport, Floyd Dell, Jessie Taft, John Watson, and Kimball Young.

**Sexology.** When one considers the importance of sex, both for individual happiness and for social welfare, it appears strange that it has in the past received so little serious intellectual attention. It is even more surprising that with the advent of scientific enthusiasm in the nineteenth century sex remained relatively neglected. Even now, there is no considerable collection of sex knowledge deserving the dignity of "a science of sex." Seminaries in their training of the minister, normal schools in the preparation they give for teaching, and most remarkable of all, the medical schools in their professional courses, with the exception of those in psychiatry, deal with sex only incidentally if they do not entirely ignore it. Yet in the pastoral problems of the minister, the school problems of the educator, and the medical problems of the physician, sex plays no insignificant part.

The first explanation of the meager interest taken in sex by the scientist is the social taboo which has operated both consciously and unconsciously to turn the attention of the investigators elsewhere. The present situation, however, is not entirely the result of taboo. Sex has been so little studied that its importance has not been recognized. Sex conduct, to be sure, has had as much attention as it deserved but almost entirely from the moral or legislative point of view. No aspect of human behavior has been more scrutinized from the viewpoint of

moral responsibility, with condemnation of evil practices, than sex. It has not been so much that taboo has prevented the scientist from following a recognized interest as that conventional thought has concealed from him the significance of sex behavior as something else than an expression of moral character.

When it is declared that our present attitude toward sex is medieval, as was recently resolved by a representative organization of medical men, scant justice is done to the practical and serious interest sex received from the theologians of the Catholic Church during the period of its greatest dominance. Although their purposes were moral, these men in their interpretation of sex sin plowed the ground deeply. For example, so great an authority as Havelock Ellis bears testimony that Sanchez in his *De Matrimonio* plumbed the sex life of men and women without morbidity or sentimentality, in language as devoid of emotionalism as that of the modern scientist.<sup>1</sup>

The philosopher has avoided sex as much, certainly, as has the scientist. Aside from the discussions of Plato, of Rousseau, who was chiefly interested in the sex training of children, of Kant, who gave it scant attention, of Schopenhauer and of Hartmann, who pronounced it a source of treacherous illusion, the significance of sex in human conduct received no recognition. In contrast, literature has been constant in its interest in sex and love and in its endeavor to deal realistically with the dramatic experiences that cluster about them. No writer has shown more penetration in dealing with this subject than Maupassant, the famous short story writer of France.

Although sex, without question, has been relatively neglected by the thinker and the scientist, there is not an absolute barrenness of literature. From time to time there have been writers on sex and investigators who have dealt with special problems, thus contributing to an ever-growing interest which in our time has come to have substantial volume. Among these are the following whose names should be familiar to the student: Mantegazza, the Italian anthropologist who wrote on the physiology of love; Tissot, who showed a pioneering interest in masturbation; Bebel, the German who attempted an analysis of the characteristics of women; and later, Moll, best known in this country for his *Sexual Life of the Child*; Krafft-Ebing, who dealt with the medico-forensic aspects of the topic and wrote *Psychopathia Sex-*

<sup>1</sup> Havelock Ellis, *Studies on the Psychology of Sex*, Vol. I, p. 5.



*ualis*; Forel, who produced a somewhat similar work under the title, *The Sexual Question*; and Edward Carpenter, an Englishman, whose *Love's Coming of Age* was published in 1896. It is interesting that Carpenter, after having tried in succession five or six well-known London publishers, had to bring out the book himself. It was immediately translated in several European languages and was especially popular, particularly in Germany and the United States. It still remains of interest to the student. Another author was James Hinton, a brilliant and erratic English physician whose last years were devoted to work in the field of sexual morality. Hinton's greater claim for recognition lies in his stimulating influence upon Havelock Ellis.

It was not until the latter part of the nineteenth century that anything approaching a science of sex can be justly said to have appeared. In 1897, Ellis published in England the first volume of his famous work on the psychology of sex. It was entitled *Sexual Inversion*. The following year a copy was purchased by a disguised detective from Scotland Yard, and the seller of the book, George Dedborough, brought to trial for dealing in obscene literature. This action of the government was strongly protested by a large group of thoughtful and influential English men and women. Dedborough, to save himself from the heavy sentence he feared, pled guilty, thus preventing Ellis from defending the scientific character of the book which was condemned in the judgment of the presiding judge in a denunciation which now makes curious reading. Ellis continued his investigation and eventually his *Psychology of Sex* reached six volumes, published by an American firm.

In the United States G. Stanley Hall, President of Clark University, realizing the need of more accurate knowledge of sex, especially in the life of children and youth, diligently investigated the subject and in his *Adolescence*, published in 1904, treated the subject as of importance from the point of view of the educator.

All workers in the field of sex have been overshadowed by Sigmund Freud, the world-famous Austrian psychiatrist whose brilliant interpretations have revolutionized psychology, psychiatry, and all serious study of sex experience. Nevertheless, in the literal sense, Freud has been more concerned with the influence of fearful thinking about sex and sex experiences in its relation to various forms of mental disturbance than with sex adjustments in marriage. Indeed, it is clear that for the most part such scientific interest as we have had in problems

of sex has been in regard to the unusual, the morbid, and the pathology of sex rather than to the achievement of a satisfactory sex career. In 1895 Freud published in collaboration with Joseph Breuer the epoch-making *Studies of Hysteria*, in which first emerges the original concept of sex which has justly made Freud known throughout the world. Possibly the most important recent contributions to the building of the science of sex have been the writings of W. F. Robie and of Wilhelm Stekel, medical specialists who have gathered from extensive practice information of the greatest value.

**Sociology.** Although sociology, practically from the beginning, has shown considerable interest in problems allied with sex, such as illegitimacy, the family, divorce, prostitution, and others, it has been remarkably neglectful of marriage as a social experience and of the larger aspects of sex. William I. Thomas's studies in the social psychology of sex, published under the title *Sex and Society*, stands almost alone. Since this book appeared in 1907 the science has responded with a more modern attitude, in part because of the pressure that came with the spreading of the Freudian interpretation and in part because of the changing code which has resulted from the breaking of the conspiracy of silence. Phyllis Blanchard, Ernest Burgess, V. F. Calverton, W. Goodsell, Hornell Hart, the Lynds, W. F. Ogburn, and Anna Garlin Spencer, are some of those who have shown special interest in particular phases of marriage. Associated with the sociologist we have in biology Paul Popenoe and H. S. Jennings, and in education Maurice Bigelow.

**Mental Hygiene.** To realize the full meaning of the mental hygiene movement one must think of it as the attempt of several organizations and many individuals to distribute widely information regarding human adjustment which helps men and women to achieve happier and safer adjustment, thus preventing mental and social disaster. In this effort the National Committee of Mental Hygiene and the American Social Hygiene Association have had a prominent part. Although neither has been chiefly concerned with marriage, both have had to recognize the important rôle it plays in the building of mental and social soundness.

Psychiatry, the science concerned with mental disease, has had an immense influence upon the Mental Hygiene movement. In psychiatry the teaching of Freud has led to much controversy but the Mental Hygiene movement as a whole has refrained from allying itself

with any of the conflicting schools. The most violent anti-Freudians have recognized that in any program designed to advance mental health neither sex nor marriage experience can be safely ignored. Among the American leaders in the Mental Hygiene movement are William A. White, Adolph Meyer, Frankwood Williams, Beatrice Hinkle, Trigant Burrow, Isador Coriat, Abraham Myerson, George K. Pratt, Arthur Ruggles, A. A. Brill, William Snow and M. J. Exner.

**Scientific research.** Although hampered by natural reticence and by conventional taboo, research has been carried on in the effort to gather additional information regarding marriage in its various phases. The value of this can hardly be overestimated. Education, legislation and any constructive program undertaken as a means of making progress in marriage and family relationships depend for success upon an increase of factual knowledge regarding the problems involved. In spite of the difficulties encountered in such research the amount of material published in this country is already heartening. To list a part of this reveals the wide range that research has taken. Some of the titles of material published are: *Factors in the Sex Life of Twenty-two Hundred Women*, K. B. Davis; *A Research in Marriage*, G. V. Hamilton; *American Marriage and Family Relationships*, E. R. Groves and W. F. Ogburn; *A Research in Family Law*, A. C. Jacobs and R. C. Angell; *The Unmarried Mother*, P. G. Kammerer; *Middletown, A Study of Contemporary American Culture*, Part II, R. S. and H. M. Lynd; *Social Control of Sex Expression and Decisions in the United States*, G. May; *Domestic Discord*, E. R. Mowrer; and *Successful Marriage*, C. G. Woodhouse.

**Using the science we have.** In contrast with the science of marriage we have what may well be called an art. Some individuals have been interested in giving to those starting marriage, and to those who find themselves in matrimonial difficulty, counsel gathered from experience and from study of problems connected with marriage and the family. A great part of this counseling has been given by physicians in their ordinary practice, by ministers and priests in their pastoral service, by educators who have won the confidence of their students, and especially by psychiatrists who in dealing with the mental difficulties of their patients have been forced to recognize the significance of sex and marriage experience. In several American cities are found individual ministers and priests who have won a local reputation as wise counselors. Although he was a general medical practitioner,

Dr. W. F. Robie, of Baldwinville, Massachusetts, gave the greater part of his time to those seeking help in marriage difficulty, especially along the line of physical sex. At the present time Dr. Robert L. Dickinson, secretary of the Committee on Maternal Health, New York City, is performing the same type of service on a somewhat wider range. Oliver M. Butterfield, of Laverne, California, has become well known as a specialist in the giving of matrimonial counsel. The author of this text has long been interested in the art of helping people to make successful marriage and family adjustments, and the demand for such service when he taught in Boston was such as to threaten to dislodge him from his chosen profession. He has long advocated marriage clinics for the purpose of giving information to those who desire it. The first clinic of this kind was started by Dr. Paul Popenoe at Los Angeles in 1930; several others have been established since, and there is promise of more. The functions of such organizations will be treated in a later chapter.

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## CHAPTER III

### THE PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE

**Complex functions of marriage.** Although they are closely allied, marriage and the family must be clearly distinguished in any discussion of the function of the former. The two terms connote different sorts of experiences, and it is possible now, as it has been in the past, to have one without the other. In this book, our interest in the family is merely incidental and indirect.

It is an error, and one that has been common in the past, to think of marriage as something that continues on the higher human level the animal instinct of sex or reproduction. This misapprehension has caused many of the theorists to conceive of marriage as a biological extension, and they have supported their arguments by descriptions of the sex behavior and pairing of male and female among the higher animals. This line of reasoning leads us away from a true picture of both human marriage and the family. Neither of these experiences as we now find them is an instinctive activity or is related in any definite way to animal impulses. Even mother love, which is more closely connected with the inherited propensities, has been carried far beyond anything suggested by lower biological experience. The coming of the crudest form of marriage represents a vast evolutionary departure from animal characteristics. At no point has the social code carried us farther away from biological intimations. The quality of the experiences that fall within human marriage is as far away from anything known to the animal as is the form of human mating distant from that found among the highest animals. Marriage provides an opportunity for satisfactions, irritations, disappointments, and realizations that are exclusively human. Present marriage also is thousands of years separated from anything that we find among the most primitive people and that we infer to have been true in still earlier stages of evolution.

Marriage is not required even among us for the functioning of either sex or reproduction, although it decidedly influences both of these human activities. Marriage is something that has been built up to

conserve and to further a variety of interests. In part, it is a solution of problems that gather about sex and reproduction, those that in animal existence were taken care of by inherited impulses, but it is more than merely a substitution for instinct or a process of social control of what on lower levels goes on automatically.

In any attempt to understand modern marriage, it is imperative that it be divorced from the question of its origin or even its simple forms. Interesting as such questions are to the sociologist and psychologist, they do not lay bare anything essential to present experience. This is fortunate, for there is no clearness as to the characteristics of the earliest forms of marriage. Certainly there is no basis for assuming that any single purpose brought into existence the social habit which in its present complicated form we call marriage. There are grounds for believing that from the start marriage was built upon more than one social interest and that it was an experience complex in character.

The various motives, if we can use an expression so suggestive of consciousness and foresight, which led to the coming of marriage were given different emphasis according to the social situation. This accounts for the disposition that appears in the literature of the past to think of marriage as exclusively an attempt to regulate sex behavior, or to give security to the family, or to provide for a more advantageous division of labor between the sexes and the greater economic safety that accompanied such association. Unquestionably, the anthropologist finds at different periods and among various groups the stressing of one of these motives and a subordinating of the others. This does not justify, however, the statement that marriage in any particular tribe or at any definite cultural development exists only for sex regulation, for family security, for economic welfare, for political unity, or for romantic satisfaction. Recognition of this multiplicity of motives for marriage prepares the student for the complexity of functions that now more than ever is characteristic of matrimony.

It is evident that from the beginning marriage provided a greater security, especially in safeguarding the economic interests of the wife by providing for her a family background. From this point of view, marriage was the fixing of masculine responsibility in a coöperating union in which the interest of mother and child overshadowed other advantages. In spite of this, marriage must not be thought of as merely the gateway into family experience, a security required for

maternity. This it did accomplish, but this does not give the full measure of its social importance.

It is well to remember that marriage is an artificial institution in the sense that it is something that has developed out of human experience in the endeavor to make both individual and social life safer and more satisfying. Since it was not even in its first faint expression, so far as we now have any reason to suppose, a spontaneous expression of human desire, the study of primitive man gives no encouragement to those who would solve the problems of marriage or determine its characteristics by appealing to the strength of some native human trend. Marriage is a social scheme for handling the various interests that came through the experience, and this process of adaptation still shows itself in the changes that occur from time to time in marriage experience. We find the changes taking place after we leave the animal level as human culture mounts to its higher plane.

Marriage provided a method of sex coöperation and lessened the competition between the man and woman which had to find some practical compromise as culture advanced to greater complexity. Thus marriage was a method of increasing, through coöperative relationships, the advantages and the satisfactions of male and female. The need of the woman as an actual or potential mother contributed immeasurably to the insistence on the security of marriage, but the subsequent results of this proved as indispensable to the growth of the man as to the welfare of the woman or the child.

The simplicity of marriage among primitive people must not hide the variety of interests represented by the institution or lead us to forget that the individual in his reaction disclosed personal motives, only slightly at first because of the uniformity of social conditions, and now in great degree. In our time it is not too much to say that the significance of marriage as a means for personal satisfaction reveals to a great extent the cultural level of the individual as well as the customary standards of a national group or a sectional culture.

Thus the motives that lead into marriage are distinctly concrete, and if we could bring to the surface without rationalization the expectation of the man and the woman in each individual union, it would be startling to find the great differences of emphasis that still persist and often the great distance between the man and the woman in their ideals. Such a survey would bring at once a recognition of the root from which now come the difficulties, the incompatibilities, the es-



rangements, the disillusionments in matrimony, so constantly rehearsed in modern literature.

**The evolution of marriage purpose.** The history of human marriage must not be thought of as a regular progress in which, according to the time sequence, steady advance goes on. Such a conception not only distorts the evolution of marriage but it pushes aside the significant fact that always needs emphasis, that marriage adapts itself to social conditions and that at any period in the past, as at present, we find great diversity of development between the different groups. There is variation of motive also among individuals within each group, at least as soon as the cultural level reaches the point where any degree of individuality is possible. In our own time the searching of the motives that lead men and women into marriage would reveal that many are influenced chiefly by desires more in accord with those predominating in earlier periods than by those that are characteristic of people to-day.

It is suggestive to sketch the changes in marriage motive during the period that we can trace this evolution, if only it be realized that this is a rough description, allowing for many exceptions, and not a rigid, inclusive summary that allows no variations among individuals and among groups.

Such an interpretation has been given by Müller-Lyer, who considers the three important motives that have always drawn people into marriage, interests that cluster about a love need, the production of offspring, and the mutual helpfulness of husband and wife. These three fundamental urges are expressed in different proportions during three epochs in the cultural history of man.<sup>1</sup>

In the first period, when conditions were primitive, the third or economic motive was most significant. Love took a simple form devoid of jealousy and romance. Sex appeal was felt and satisfied outside the marriage bond. Thus love had least to do with the emergence of marriage. The desire for children was the second in strength. In this period these three interests according to their significance were: economic advantage, children, love.

The second period witnesses an advance in social conditions corresponding to the earlier stages of what we know as civilization. Woman is now less of a manual worker and more a housekeeper. The

<sup>1</sup> F. Müller-Lyer, *Evolution of Modern Marriage*, Chap. 2.

field work formerly done by her has fallen upon slaves. A surplus of wealth has been built up and the most prosperous enjoy a considerable degree of luxury. Property has come to have importance and is passed on by inheritance from parent to child. The strongest motive for marrying is the desire to have heirs. The author quotes Demosthenes in a phrase that well describes the sentiments of his time. "We have prostitutes for pleasure, concubines for the daily care of the body, and wives for the production of legitimate children and as trusty caretakers of our homes." Of course, under such circumstances great stress would be laid upon the fertility of the woman, and her failure to produce children was sufficient ground for divorce. During this epoch the three motives for marriage appeared in the following order of importance: children, economic advantage, love.

The third epoch roughly corresponds to modern civilization. Machinery has become the substitute for the slave; child labor has ceased to be profitable for the parent; and children are no longer a satisfactory insurance against old age; the sterility of woman has ceased to be a social disgrace; the economic motive for marriage has a lesser importance except in those groups where the dowry still prevails. The motive that has come to the front is the love interest which had so small a place in primitive life. The marriage partner is chosen primarily for love response rather than as a laborer or a propagating animal. The motives now appear in the following order: love, children, economic advantage.

Any application of this scheme to a definite period of time reveals the need of regarding it as an elastic classification. For example, in rural sections of the United States at the present time, the mutual need of economic coöperation between husband and wife is a primary motive of marriage that even at times rivals love. On the other hand, so late a period as that of Napoleon witnessed a divorce due to sterility when the desire of the Emperor for an heir pushed aside the romantic attachment of Bonaparte and his beloved Josephine.

**Present theories of marriage.** It is an advantage to attempt analysis of the purpose of marriage from another point of view. Instead of asking the question, Why do people enter marriage? we can ask, Why is the marriage relationship maintained? When we approach marriage from this angle we find ourselves dealing with five rather common ideas. Even in the case of those who give little thought to the origin of marriage one of these theories, usually the

first, best describes the sentiment felt and the attitude taken toward matrimony. These theories have been interpreted in a fascinating manner by the Binkleys.<sup>2</sup>

The first and most important of these is the romantic theory of marriage. This is what the Binkleys describe as the schoolgirl's attitude. Marriage is a social provision for the union in happiness of those who have fallen in love with each other. According to this theory, each man and each woman has somewhere a perfect mate with whom, and with whom alone, happiness can come. The business of the courtship period is to discover this indispensable lover. Love is something that sparks into unison two individuals neither of whom can ever achieve domestic happiness with any other person. In this searching for the indispensable lover there is risk, of course, of being betrayed by false attraction as were the eighteenth century mariners by the ship-wrecking pirate's donkey-powered, revolving light on the shore, but for such there is no way out. True love response, once achieved, guarantees happiness and for it there is no compensation. This is more than the adolescent daydream of the schoolgirl, for it floods our literature, our drama, our poetry, and the common thinking and feeling about marriage among the people of the United States. It is not a mere theory that attempts to rationalize the marriage choice once it is made, for it is the impelling notion of marriage held by the majority of those who unite in matrimony.

Those who govern themselves by this theory have no difficulty in explaining marriage failure. Obviously, those who are unhappy in a relationship that ought to bring absolute bliss have been led astray in their searching for the one and only lifemate. It is as if happiness were locked in a safety vault opened only by the use of two separate keys, one in the possession of a certain woman and the other in the hands of a particular man. Only in marriage can it be known whether the keys brought together actually fit the lock.

A second theory may well be called that of sex license. The Binkleys stigmatize it as the tom-cat theory. Marriage from this point of view is the licensing by the state of sex pleasure. The man because of his equipment of physical passion chases the woman, and for her protection and advantage society forces him to give her a legal status as his wife and to accept the responsibilities that go with this. The

<sup>2</sup> R. T. and S. W. Binkley, *What Is Right with Marriage?*, Chap. 2.

woman in exchange for the pleasure she brings to the man is given permanent security.

The marriage method of regulating sex contact also contributes to the public peace by checking the predatory trends of the man and by placing on him the economic maintenance of the woman and child. Marriage approaches a property contract relationship, each member of the union being given rights as well as obligations that the other must recognize. After the marriage each of the partners is expected to guard his or her exclusive rights of possession to the sex contribution of the other. Thus marriage is a compromising scheme which defines but cannot end the conflict of interest which is supposed to exist between man and woman. It is assumed to be especially favorable for the woman who otherwise on account of weakness would become man's prey.

The third theory is based on the notion of penalty. This has been called the rat-trap conception of marriage. It is similar to the second but carries the idea of the exclusiveness of masculine sex hunger to a greater extreme and considers marriage the price that man has to pay for his satisfaction. Thus the relationship of marriage becomes a bargain into which man is led by his passion, promising guarantees that later often prove irksome. Because of the risk of disillusion public opinion and legislation must make as difficult as possible the escape that tempts the unhappy. Marriage becomes the scheme by which society obtains concessions from the uninitiated male. If later he repents and claims that he was tricked, he is met with derision or exhortation according to the character of the person to whom he brings his complaint.

The fourth theory considers marriage as a social institution. Marriage is held to be a derivative of the family and its reason for being must be found in its relation to the social utilities furnished by that more significant and complex institution. Even if the benefits of marriage are thought of as the regulation of sex conduct, the security of the child, the educational responsibilities of parent-child contact, the point of view is social rather than individual advantage.

This theory turns us away from the question, Why do people maintain marriage? and is content with pointing out the benefits that come to society from the institution of marriage and the family. Yet it is evident that men and women seldom marry in the effort to achieve good citizenship, and it is hard to believe that in times past the two



institutions were brought forth by social leadership without the operation of any personal motive for matrimony and parenthood. The institutional theory satisfies those who are content with having the social benefits of marriage and the family interpreted, but it still leaves unanswered the question, What appeal does human nature find in marriage which makes it personally acceptable? and it is just this question that a satisfactory theory of marriage must answer.

The word fellowship seems to bring out better than any other the distinctive emphasis of the fifth theory. This interpretation of marriage is very recent. It has come about in part because of the attack that is now being made upon the other theories of marriage which were better received in a more docile period of culture. With the emergence of individuality and the stress that is increasingly being given to the notion of self-expression, there is scant tolerance for the second and third theories, no satisfaction in the fourth, and among the thoughtful disrespect for the first. Those who have wrestled with individual problems of maladjustment in marriage and family experience have been driven to the endeavor to understand the appeal of marriage not only to him who is entering upon it but also for the men and women who find through it increasing satisfaction.

It is apparent upon the most superficial knowledge of concrete marriage experience that there is no standard motivation which alone brings content. All sorts of people are happily married and all sorts of people find marriage disappointing. Of course, it avails little to shout persistently that the motive and justification of matrimony is happiness. It is not untrue that individuals marry to be happy, but the affirmation helps little in understanding marriage, since it is true of all normal human activities that behind them is the quest for happiness. Any modern interpretation of marriage must not only do justice to the motivating influences that act upon the individual who marries, it must also conceive of marriage as a continuous functioning experience able to adapt itself to individual and social variation.

No term seems to carry the thought quite so well as fellowship, for it may include economic coöperation, sex union, emotional, intellectual and spiritual intimacy, mutual protection, and, in case of offspring, a working together for the nurture and education of the children. Marriage is not an exclusive form of fellowship but it is one of the most complex and is usually the most intense. The success of any individual marriage depends upon fellowship possibilities along all the

lines pertinent to the two individuals concerned. Marriage is a public confession and legal registration of an adventure in fellowship, a fusion that fulfills the complementary craving which Plato has so well described.

This fellowship is a fulfillment of normal human need. It is in the latter part of adolescence that the recognition of the desire for a unique relationship with a member of the opposite sex commonly awakens, and this explains the element of truth in the romantic theory. Except when jealousy abounds there is not a demand for a monopoly of one's beloved but an insistence upon a supreme and unduplicated relationship. The mistake of those captivated by the romantic fancy is in believing that the strength of feeling demonstrates that the one and only person suitable for a life mate has been found. Actually the emotion flows out of inner need which has been stimulated by the other person's presence, thus crossing the threshold of consciousness. In spite of its supremacy over all other relationships except that of parenthood, the love relationship must depend upon conditions for its vitality and permanency just as do other persistent comradeships. There has to be a common basis of interest, a coöperative give and take, a continuing delight in association, and mutual satisfaction in the intimate experience of sex, or the fellowship lessens and fades away and eventually becomes irritating rather than satisfying.

This theory of marriage as a fellowship experience reveals the motives that perpetuate the relationship and explains the reasons for matrimonial failure and for the increasing hazards that go with the greater complexity of civilization. This theory does justice to the grain of truth in the first and second theories but insists that the social recognition of the special relationship, the ceremony that gives it legality, is not something alien to human desire but the announcement of a unique fellowship which the individuals wish others to recognize. While it is true, as the *institution* theory asserts, that society benefits from the marriage scheme, this does not explain the origin nor guarantee the persistence of marriage.

**Marriage and satisfaction.** As marriage shapes itself in modern life, there is an unmistakable trend toward emphasizing in its fellowship the worth of the mate as a person rather than as a means of procuring extrinsic values. This means that affection is coming to have a larger place in successful marriage. There are those who grow fearful because of this, feeling that affection cannot provide sufficient



support for marriage. As a matter of fact, there is nothing so powerful as affection. With its coming appear sympathy, tolerance, forbearance and coöperation. Moreover, nothing is so desired by the majority of men and women as this relation of affectionate response. There is also a craving for an unlimited and permanent fellowship.

It is true that the marriage of any man and woman has to depend for its security upon its inherent strength. Especially is this true as the economic motive of marriage fades away. The lessening of compulsion gives opportunity for greater stress on affection and the history of the evolution of parenthood reveals how substantial affection may be as a basis of relationship and responsibility. It may be granted that affection in its finest expression is an aristocratic achievement but fortunately it is a quality of character that is not dependent upon the accident of birth, class standing, or even educational opportunity. It is also something that can be socially cultivated and built into the life of the child in early years, and the more clearly it is realized that here marriage must find its chief support, the greater will be the effort of parents and educators and spiritual leaders to encourage the growth and refinement of affection. No program at the present time can be more disastrous to marriage success than that built upon the idea that matrimony depends for its support and survival upon external compulsion.

The goal of the fellowship of marriage is fulfillment, and in our time, with the lessening of the significance of economic maintenance, family perpetuation, mere physical passion, and desire for comfort, there is a corresponding enlargement of the meaning of intimate response. The basic want becomes a craving for the certainty of affection. This is an incentive for character growth, a process which must be understood as taking place on diverse levels. Individuals differ in their starting point for the quest, but unless they make headway they share a common disappointment. The attainment desired changes in character with advancing years, but this also contributes to growth and prevents any static ideal. An association created by reciprocal attraction and expressed in intimate communion leads the personality forward.

**Marriage as a status.** Whatever theory of marriage one accepts, one must recognize that the relationship represents a status which society has to define. Its status-character has from the first been tied up with those matters that in a more narrow sense can be thought of

as the family. In the simplest society occurs the family unit. Not only is it universal, it is also supremely important among the social groups. The recognition it gets reflects upon its ally, marriage. In this way the form and the function that marriage assumes are influenced in their development by the social significance of the family. We find no society maintaining absolute promiscuity, and on the basis of available ethnological data we cannot demonstrate that such a condition ever existed. We do see among primitive people what appears from the point of view of present civilization to be a relative looseness of sex relationship and this suggests to some a prior state when there was no regulating of sex conduct and no establishment of any kind of marriage. Present evidence suggests that regulation of sex life accompanied the appearance of society itself, coming with the family as a product of the earliest organization and at the same time contributing to the first faint coöperative activities which signified the appearance of human society.

The importance of marriage as a status appears in the large measure of taboo that became associated with sex and family contacts. No taboos were stronger than those relating to incest and other restrictions placed upon sex behavior and the mating habit.

The value of the family unit as a means of fixing responsibility and defining the privileges of individuals also was reflected in the meaning given marriage. In this status-making trend we see from the first two lines of development which in our maturity of social experience have become the legal and the religious interpretation. In a fellowship so complicated as that of marriage, with numerous direct and indirect problems of adjustment, there was no escape from legal definition through custom and statutory law. At present there is a vast accumulation of common law decisions and legislative acts that concern marriage, resulting from the effort to clarify the marriage status and to protect both man and woman from selfishness, disloyalty, and abandonment of necessary responsibility.

Religion, acting through ecclesiastical dogma and discipline, also attempts to define from its point of view the meaning and the duties of matrimony. This effort at interpretation by the churches has always been one of their chief social problems and usually about it has centered, as is true to-day in many of our churches, intense controversy.

Obviously this natural trend toward definition of the marriage state

on the part of both law and ecclesiastical teachings, inevitable as it is, carries constant danger of building up formal obligations which by their authority come to antagonize the more essential spirit of fellowship which alone gives security to marriage. It is true of marriage, as of every other form of personal relationship, that just as soon as legal rights and obligations are made to take the place of loyalty and coöperation, people who are in dispute go to the court for a settlement of their difficulty. Their recourse to the law is confession of the absence of neighborhood spirit. For the purposes of public order it has proven expedient for the court to intervene in the case of individuals lacking the capacity to compromise their differences and achieve good adjustment.

In spite of the progress that has been made from the nineteenth century forward in the removing of property disabilities and other discriminations against women and in the securing of a more just recognition of the rights of children, legislation relating to the family has not kept pace with the changes that have occurred in our social life. The retardation of familial law has been said to be so great as to make it two or three decades behind legislation that concerns itself with business.<sup>3</sup>

It is important to notice that marriage is influenced by legislation that is indirectly related to it as well as by laws that attempt to fix its status. Even the legislator sometimes overlooks the effect of laws dealing with problems of health, housing, taxation, and commerce upon the practical working of the family and to a lesser extent upon marriage. These indirect legal influences have a part in determining the status of marriage. It is not surprising that this aspect of law-making has been so greatly ignored, since even the laws concerned with domestic relations have had scant attention from the scholar and the social scientist. The differences in the degree of backwardness of marriage laws in the several states, especially as related to divorce, have led to much confusion regarding the legal status of individual husbands and wives, to a quantity of litigation, and to the notorious use of subterfuge, of which neither the general public nor the judges have been ignorant.

<sup>3</sup> "Report of the Committee of the Columbia Law School on the Family and Familial Property, 1927." See A. C. Jacobs and R. C. Angell, *A Research in Family Law*, p. 3.

**Marriage as a convention.** Social regulation of marriage comes from another quarter than the legislative hall and the court. Public opinion operates with greater effectiveness than the law. Thus marriage is made a convention as well as a legal status. The husband and wife who unite in matrimony are no more free from the customs and the ideas of their neighborhood, class and period of time than they are isolated as individuals. Public opinion affects them in their living together in the same manner that it influences their personal conduct as individuals. The conventional aspect of marriage appears even as early as courtship and ordinarily comes to have a decisive influence over the wedding and the honeymoon. Neither the husband nor the wife can safely ignore the general ideas concerning what is proper and to be expected in the marriage relationship.

It is important to keep this conventional character of marriage in mind in the attempt to discover its legal status. For example, it is not uncommon to find grounds for divorce in simple society which would make one believe that husbands throw wives away in the most fickle manner and that the wife has no redress. It is not, however, enough to find what can legally happen as provided for by the regulations of such a society. One must also discover whether or not public opinion approves that which is permissible. Often it is found that the general idea of what is proper is so contrary to what the legal system allows that the privileges allowed by law are rarely used.

The significance of the conventional aspect of marriage varies according to the responsiveness of the individual and the closeness of his contact with his group. At present in our country there is a great difference between the sensitiveness to public opinion of married people living in the country and of those who dwell in the large cities. Wherever primary contact predominates, the conventions that concern marriage are strengthened. This was well expressed by a wife, who, becoming suspicious that a woman neighbor in her New York apartment house was not married, as she claimed, to the man who visited her from time to time, said to her husband: "There is no question how I would feel about this back in my Vermont village, but I am not so sure that I ought to pass judgment until I know all the circumstances." Her confidence in conventions had been weakened by years of living in an environment where contacts were secondary. The effect upon her of temporary and varied association had been such as to destroy her former simplicity and certainty of judgment.



It is interesting, on the other hand, to notice that conventions sometimes have authority when law has none. In our criminal underworld in the cities we find a recognition of status even when there has been no marriage and no thought of legalizing the union. The man and woman and their friends recognize the existence of a special relationship that carries with it obligations, restrictions, and loyalty suggestive of ordinary matrimony. The woman possesses the man and the man, the woman, and each resents any infringement by others of his or her rights. The same attitude can be found among Negroes of the South, as has been true from the days of slavery.

The coercive influence of convention may antagonize marriage fellowship just as certainly as does any disposition shown by husband or wife to fall back upon his or her legal marital rights. Unquestionably, the backwardness of conventional attitude, particularly as concerns sex, has acted in the past and in some sections and classes still acts as an obstacle to happy mating. When the conventions are rather consistent in the various classes of society and change with comparative slowness, no great problem results, but when there is confusion of standards in conventional thought and when, as at present, a breaking down and rebuilding of convention goes on rapidly, there is much opportunity not only for conflict between husband and wife on account of differences in their conventional attitudes, but there is also a moral struggle within the individual who emotionally clings to former conventions while at the same time rationally accepting new ideas. This situation of inner stress as a cause of matrimonial incompatibility and failure is found by those who give counsel to the married to be one of the most common of problems.

**Marriage as a sacrament.** Religion appears to have been universal among preliterate people and always to have given sanction to the regulation of sex and the maintenance of marriage. We find also in all the historic religions authoritative teaching concerning sex conduct and marriage. Along with the evolution of faith among the Hebrews went the building of an explicit code of sex behavior which was as superior to the practices of other religious groups as was the monotheistic conception of God superior to that of other religious doctrines. By the time of Jesus monogamy had become the established form of marriage among the Hebrews and was supported by the conventions, the ethical teachings, and the religious sanction of the period.

Jesus recognized marriage and He is held by a part of His adherents to have given it special religious significance by making it a sacrament. This is the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. By sacrament is meant that marriage has become an outward sign of grace, instituted by Christ, and conferring grace upon the recipient.<sup>4</sup> Thus marriage comes to have a religious significance similar to that of baptism and the Eucharist. Belief in the sacramental character of marriage is an essential in the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. The *Council of Trent* declared that if any one denied that matrimony is really and truly one of the seven sacraments of the evangelical law, instituted by Christ, or that it confers grace, let him be anathema.

Among Protestants there has been a difference of opinion regarding this but the more common position has been that of Calvin, that, although marriage is a good and holy ordinance of God, it is in no sense a sacrament. The teaching of all branches of Christianity has been in agreement with regard to the ethical and religious importance of the experience of marriage. Such stress has been placed upon sex repression and control that immorality along this line has been regarded by certain preachers and theologians as a synonym for sin in general.

Although marriage according to Roman Catholic doctrine is a sacrament, voluntary celibacy from spiritual motive is to be ranked higher than marriage. Schmiedeler tells us that this emphasis on celibacy is not on account of any idea that marriage was evil or a mere confession of human weakness but because celibacy provides still higher spiritual experience and permits concentration upon charity and Christian service.<sup>5</sup>

**Individuality of marriage experience.** When marriage is looked at from the point of view of those who enter it seeking mutual fellowship and satisfaction, its individuality stands out. It is the fusion of two people who attempt adjustment in the supreme intimacy of life and each of whom brings to the undertaking a unique personality and social background. In each combination it is as true that the qualities of the united life are different from those of any other union as that the husband and the wife are without duplication. Nothing happens because of their union to snatch away the peculiarities of both, but each separately reacts to the common experience and from his own point of view appraises its value.

<sup>4</sup> P. J. Gannon, *Holy Matrimony*, p. 28.

<sup>5</sup> Edgar Schmiedeler, *An Introductory Study of the Family*, p. 28.



This was not so true in the past because the woman had a lesser opportunity for self-expression and was socially conditioned to take as a matter of course what in modern marriage she receives with protest. It is reasonable to suppose that in meeting the hardships of matrimony woman was formerly both more tolerant than now and at the same time less articulate when dissatisfied. It was not merely that under the code of man's dominance she more willingly accepted his superiority and her own sacrifice; it was rather that she strove for a praiseworthy character, the goal of all good women, which included unselfishness and self-suppression, whereas the modern woman's ideal demands greater equality in the satisfactions and the responsibilities that normally go with matrimony. As a consequence, the modern girl requires for her happiness a higher type of mate than just a provider and head of the household. Under the present régime the goal of satisfactory marriage becomes two-fold. It must meet the expectations of both husband and wife and satisfy masculine and feminine desires.

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## CHAPTER IV

### THE RIGHT TO MARRY

**The right to marry.** Marriage is not regarded as an absolute human right in either the ethical thought of any modern group of people or the laws of any political state. Even savage tribes have commonly denied marriage to certain individuals for religious or social reasons. An illustration of this is the squaw man who on account of failure to pass successfully the initiation test of the North American Indians was refused the masculine rôle. Always there has been unalterable prohibition of specific unions, as in the restriction of incestuous marriages which was frequently accompanied by definition of incest that carried it far beyond the tie of kinship which it implies among modern people.

In the United States at the present time the right to marry is more limited by law than is the right to vote. In the restrictions put upon those who desire to marry there are great differences between the states, and everywhere the effectiveness of the law depends upon public opinion and the efficiency of administration.

Nowhere in modern life does the state guarantee the right to marry by furnishing those free from restriction a suitable mate. In that sense of human right no state accepts responsibility nor is there insistence upon marriage as the political obligation of the adult citizen. In preliterate society we commonly find practically everybody of marriageable age entering matrimony, and public opinion forces this so thoroughly that marriage, except for the religious virgin or the patently defective or the male who has lost masculine standing, is taken as a matter of course. Such widespread pairing in marriage cannot occur in complex society where personal preference expresses itself and where the monogamic form of marriage is maintained, requiring for universal marriage an exact proportion of marriageable adults in each community.

What we commonly mean by the right to marry is freedom from restriction. Three forms of restraint are found: the prudential, the ethical including the religious, and the legal. Usually the prudential

prohibitions are temporary and self-imposed, leading to delay of marriage or postponement of the thought of serious courtship rather than to the denial of marriage. The ethical restrictions cover more ground than do the legal, but their recognition and force depend upon the character of the individual. The motives that turn men and women away from marriage in the belief that this is the line of duty are various and sometimes unsubstantial, based upon ignorance of fact. The question whether an individual has or has not the moral right to marry may be exceedingly difficult to answer, and persons facing a decision in which personal desire is so strongly involved are often driven to seek counsel from a friend or from some one supposed to be wise and objective.

At the present time the legal and ethical restrictions are largely based upon the potential parenthood involved in the union of the man and woman. Marriage is interpreted as the doorway to family experience, and it is shut to some because in the opinion of the state they do not qualify as suitable mothers or fathers. Other restrictions attempt to prevent the exploitation of those who are too young to be given the privileges of citizenship, and to ensure their waiting until they are able to make a mature marriage choice.

A rather recent change in the thought of some men and women who face ethical difficulties in contemplating a marriage that eventually may lead to parenthood is to fall back upon a marriage program that excludes the coming of children. Such a program depends either upon abstinence from sex during the entire period of marriage, a limitation rarely contemplated, or upon sterilization of one of the parties to the union, or upon the use of some form of birth control. The last method of carrying out this limited type of marriage is successful in the proportion that the prevention of pregnancy is effective. Through actual experience it is found that a considerable number of those who marry in the belief that their union is justifiable because there are to be no children do become parents because through ignorance, accident, or carelessness they have failed to carry out their purpose.

Occasionally the childless marriage that is apparently accepted by both husband and wife as a substitute for the normal union gets into trouble because of the unwillingness of one of the members of the union to keep to the premarriage agreement. Sometimes from the start there has been no honest commitment by one member of the union but merely an intention of satisfying temporarily the ethical

scruples of the other party, who holds back from marriage, and an expectation that later parenthood will come about with or without the consent of the individual who hesitates to marry.

Nevertheless, there is a distinction between the character of the justifiable restrictions entailed by marriage and by parenthood. At present this is slightly recognized by ethical thinking, but in the United States not at all by legislation or court decision with the possible exception of the states that recognize the practice of eugenic sterilization.

Usually those who hesitate to marry in the belief that for them marriage is unethical are concerned with the problem of inheritance. This also is the purpose of many of the legal restrictions that forbid marriage for certain individuals. Unfortunately, the popular notions of what is and what is not inherited seldom coincide with science. Another fact even more serious in dealing with the question of those who hesitate to marry because they doubt their fitness for parenthood is the lack of knowledge of present science in regard to certain aspects of human heredity. Information is being gathered constantly, but there are still many problems of human heredity that cannot be handled with the certainty that is required to pronounce a contemplated union eugenically good or bad.

**Eugenic aspects of marriage.** It was inevitable that man's success in the breeding of animals should suggest his using the same method to improve the human race. During the nineteenth century the science of animal husbandry made great strides. An example of this is the improvement that took place in the breeding of cattle, developing two diverse types, the milk and the beef animal. The careful selection of type has produced highly satisfactory results in the breeding of dogs, horses, poultry and other domesticated animals. In spite of this success in the use of biological law to improve and determine the type, it was obvious when people became interested in problems of human heredity that the racial advancement of man was more complicated and more difficult than that of animals.

The aim of human improvement had to be diversified on account of the great number of desirable traits. Those attempting progress also had to recognize that eugenics and euthenics were inseparable. Even in animal breeding the importance of favorable conditions for the propagators and offspring cannot be disregarded. How important the reciprocal relation of heredity and environment is in dealing with



the human problem was brought out by the study of that family of wretched reputation, the Jukes, and especially by observation of the careers of those members who in recent years have gone to a more favorable environment and have married into better stock.<sup>1</sup> Although there were extremists willing to place all their hope on a eugenic or a euthenic program, the sane-minded in the two lines of endeavor have come to see that both methods of progress have to go on together, for they are interdependent.

A definite interest in the use of laws of inheritance for human betterment appeared as early as Greek thought. Plato in his famous scheme for social organization in *The Republic* provides for a rational selection of mates. This was to be brought about without the knowledge of those who were being united in matrimony, their pairing off being governed by secret manipulation of the drawing of lots by which the partners were chosen. Sparta carried into practice a considerable eugenic program by regulating marriage in a way designed to produce healthy and vigorous children.

With the new ideas that developed in Christian theology during the middle ages, attention drifted away from improvement by breeding regulations. Sin and Redemption had the center of the stage and it was a long time before any serious interest was taken in what we now call eugenics. In the nineteenth century the work of Charles Darwin led to a great interest in everything pertaining to human biology. The laws of man's heredity were involved in the controversy of the period and this led to investigations which, under the leadership of Galton, the cousin of Darwin, crystallized into the science of eugenics. Another impetus came with the rediscovery of the Mendelian principles at the opening of the twentieth century.

**Family eugenics.** There are two commonly accepted principles of family eugenics. One is that close relatives should not marry. Since such individuals draw their genes largely from common ancestral sources, there is risk that any defective genes carried on by the line of descent be added together by the duplication of ancestral traits. The closer the relationship, the greater the danger. Where the family record reveals a pronounced hereditary tendency toward undesirable traits, marriage in even distant relatives is hazardous, while on the other hand if the family record discloses remarkable soundness, the

<sup>1</sup> See A. H. Estabrook, *The Jukes in 1915*.

marriage of relatives as close as first cousins is not considered by most authorities undesirable.

A second principle is that persons whose family records show similar defects should not mate, since they also bring to their union the same trends toward hereditary evils. Even though the two individuals themselves appear perfectly free from the family defect, their mating is not on that account made safe. Each may carry in a hidden or recessive condition one of the genes because of which the ancestral descent has had its characteristic defect. Since each of the parents contributes to the child one of each pair of genes, two undesirable genes may pair and bring forth a defective offspring. Wise mating should bring together in one parent good genes to supplement those that are not so good in the other.

This program of family eugenics is not satisfactory to the thorough-going biological reformer, since it does not put an end to the passing on of defective genes but merely leads to recession. As a consequence, at some subsequent mating undesirable genes come together and a defective offspring results. The more heroic solution offered is that no one having defective genes as revealed by family history should marry at all. Thus the defective strain comes to an end and society prospers by the general soundness of the population.

**The inheritance of disease.** Any sensible person considering marriage and the possibility of parenthood wishes to forecast as accurately as possible the hereditary significance of the union. The layman who supposes that science has solved the problem of heredity is apt to assume that whatever question he asks concerning the probable character of the inheritance represented by a contemplated marriage can be answered definitely by any competent biologist. It is true that science does understand the laws of heredity, but only within a very narrow range. An example of this is the inheritance of eye color which under certain circumstances can be predicted from the eye color of the parents and of their relatives. But even this problem of heredity is more complicated than the average person realizes.

When we turn to the questions that commonly arise with respect to the risky inheritance of those who desire to marry but who have misgivings lest on account of family history they ought to remain single or to marry with some one other than the individual whom they desire, the problems involved are exceedingly complicated in most cases and should be passed on by a competent specialist who combines medical

and biological knowledge. No one finds it difficult to get advice. Relatives, teachers, ministers, and general practitioners in medicine are usually quite willing to pass dogmatic judgment regarding the most complex problems of inheritance. Unfortunately, such counsel is seldom any more valuable than the assumptions of the individuals giving it, for it is likewise based upon little factual knowledge. Of course, the program of "Safety First" suggests that in case of doubt there be no marriage, but this is an unreasonable position to assume since it would lead many not to marry who safely could.

One of the greatest needs is an opportunity for those who take a rational attitude toward questions of heredity to get in all doubtful cases the best information that present science can furnish regarding the probability of hereditary traits and tendencies represented by each combination of male and female. As the significance of the science of eugenics as a means of human betterment becomes more generally known, opportunities will doubtless develop for the getting of expert judgment such as at the present time the specialists connected with the Eugenics Record Office at Cold Spring Harbor, Long Island, New York, are prepared to give. It is not to be expected that any book will furnish material for an authoritative decision except in the most simple cases of inheritance. A text, however, can provide the background necessary to help the conscientious individual realize his problems and detect when they are serious enough to demand expert advice.

The problems that most often arise have to do with the question whether the diseases of mind and body that have appeared in the family records are likely to be inherited. Not so long ago the list of diseases that were supposed to have an hereditary basis was long and impressive, but one after another has been removed from the list as science has gathered more accurate information. It is well to remember that the recurrence of a disease in successive generations does not in itself demonstrate that it has been inherited or even that it is transmittible. It was ignorance of this that led scientists for so long a time to insist that tuberculosis was an inherited disease.

For the sake of clarity it is also necessary to keep in mind that the question is not a general but a specific one, to be decided in each separate disease by the facts. It is also necessary to recognize the distinction between inheriting a disease and inheriting a tendency toward it, that is, a lack of resistance. The subject is complicated also

by the factor known as sex-limited inheritance, which means that a defect may be transmitted by the female and yet appear only in the male.

On one point biological science is clear. It is a misuse of words to speak of any disease caused by a microbe as being inherited. Once it was supposed that a disease like tuberculosis or syphilis was actually given to the child as an inheritance. Even though children have been born with infectious diseases such as smallpox and measles, we know that these have been acquired by contact. On the other hand, we also find that immunity to certain infectious diseases like measles seems to be given to the child by the mother by both her blood and her milk.

Even though a disease may not be actually inherited, the significance of the family record in which the disease has appeared in successive generations may be practically just as significant, for it may reveal the passing on of hereditary weakness. We speak of this as a susceptibility to a certain disease. In most cases this signifies that the organism has a lack of resistance, once contact has been made with infection or strain has been put upon the weak part of the body.

In dealing with any question of the probable inheritance of a definite parenthood the significance of congenital transmission must be kept in mind. The term hereditary syphilis still appears in medical literature, but it is not a precise statement. The correct term is congenital transmission. The mother who has active syphilis, which in most cases she has contracted from her husband, transmits to the *fœtus* the *spirochæta pallida* present in her blood, so that the child contracts syphilis before birth. This is not inheritance but congenital transmission of disease. Syphilis has a special significance in this connection because the placenta does not provide the barriers that it usually does to infection present in the mother's blood.

Pusey says that although infection of the *fœtus* may take place at any time during pregnancy, it usually occurs during the first five months of foetal life and rarely after the seventh month.<sup>2</sup> When the mother has active syphilis at the time of conception or acquires it during the first five months of pregnancy, the child has little chance of escaping the disease, unless the mother receives adequate medical treatment. After the seventh month, especially if resistance is reën-

<sup>2</sup> W. A. Pusey, *Syphilis as a Modern Problem*, p. 71.



forced by medical care, the child's possibility of escape is greatly increased. It is generally held that maternal transmission of disease directly to the foetus is impossible.<sup>3</sup>

**Prevention and cure.** Even when a disease is said to be based upon heredity or encouraged by inherited trends, this does not mean that cure or prevention is impossible. Medical or surgical treatment may free the individual from his defects. But what is important from the point of view of marriage is that the original inheritance still persists and is carried on to the next generation.

The distinction between hereditary and congenital defects must be remembered in dealing with any specific problem. The child who is without an inherited deficiency may be defective as a result of environmental influences. For example, in the case of feeble-mindedness mental deficiency may arise in the child of sound inheritance from prenatal accident, or from a mechanical injury at or after birth, or from bacterial infection. Possibly drug or dietetic disturbance may also, especially in the early years of childhood, rob the individual of the mental capacity provided by inheritance. Defectiveness produced by environmental influences is not handed on even though it was evident at birth, and this, of course, is all the more clear of defects that come to the child after birth.

Complicated as the problem is, another fact adds to its complexity. Even where there is not an actual defect carried on by inheritance, there may be what is known as mutation in the germ plasm. This means that a change for better or for worse has occurred—and usually such a change is disadvantageous—which may be passed on for one or more generations. Alcohol is an illustration. It is generally believed that although the drug does not create an inheritance its excessive use may lead to a change for the worse in the germ plasm which may affect the alcoholic person's children and the children's children. Experiment with animals seems to demonstrate that this is true. The same thing appears to be associated with syphilis. The X-ray has been used to produce unfavorable mutations in animals. The toxic effect of certain substances such as lead, mercury and iodine are believed also to be possible causes of deleterious modification of the germ plasm. At present biologists are continuing their researches in the effort to understand better the meaning of mutation. Present

<sup>3</sup> M. J. Rosenau, *Preventive Medicine and Hygiene*, p. 645.



knowledge does not justify dogmatism in interpreting its significance for those contemplating marriage. In the study of mutation as it occurs in animals it has been found that these changes are usually disadvantageous, decreasing the vigor of the individual frequently to a marked degree and sometimes causing structural deformity.<sup>4</sup> It must be remembered that the entire subject is at present controversial and that there are those who deny, for example, that alcohol, by circulating in the mother's blood, influences the foetus during pregnancy.

**Common questions of inheritance.** (1) *Tuberculosis.* As short a time as a generation ago it was assumed that there was no question regarding the inheritance of tuberculosis. As evidence of this was the fact that individuals in the same family, generation after generation, died of the dread disease. We now know from the examination of the body in autopsies that practically everybody, at least in the cities, becomes infected in childhood. Usually the resistance of the body is sufficient to protect from the disease, but the lungs bear lasting testimony that it did get a start. Those who are not in fortunate circumstances or whose resistance is low may have to struggle with the disease in its more advanced stages. Resistance to tuberculosis is not determined by environmental conditions alone, for there appears to be a decided difference in the natural resistance offered by different individuals. It is here that the importance of heredity shows itself.

Clearly any one debating marriage on account of a tubercular history in the family needs to discover in addition to the persistency of its appearance from generation to generation what circumstances of an environmental character encouraged or worked against the development of the disease. The same question concerning a favorable or unfavorable environment has to be asked regarding the life to be expected after marriage. If marriage means more favorable conditions for resisting the disease, it has a different promise than if it means added hardship, struggle, and living under unfavorable conditions. For example, removing from the country to the city would carry danger as compared with going from urban congestion to the open country. As we shall later see, the problem of a possible pregnancy is involved, since one of the influences that bring out latent or quiescent tuberculosis infection, or tip the scale when a conflict between the in-

<sup>4</sup> H. S. Jennings, *Biological Basis of Human Nature*, p. 322.

fection and resistance is going on, is the strain that is put upon the mother's body with conception.

It is evident that where a condition of latent tuberculosis is suggested on account of a bad family record, the individual should have a thorough physical examination before marriage, including the X-ray photograph, temperature and pulse records made under the direction of a competent physician. The X-ray picture should reveal how serious the childhood infection was and how strong the resistance of the body has been.

It is far better to decide the problem of marriage and parenthood on a basis of factual knowledge than to trust to luck, or to worry without a clear understanding of the situation. Indeed, it would help greatly in the elimination of tuberculosis if such an examination were the routine not only before marriage but for the woman each time she contemplates pregnancy.

(2) *Epilepsy*. Epilepsy is a term used to cover various states that have in common convulsions with loss of consciousness and usually followed by deterioration of the personality. Its hereditary character has long been taken for granted. Recent studies, according to Rosenau, show an hereditary predisposition in from nine to forty per cent of the cases investigated.<sup>5</sup> In a study of parents of 1,449 epileptics thirty-four were found to have had the disease and 621 instances of serious nervous or mental diseases appeared among relatives.<sup>6</sup> In another study, Thom found that epilepsy is transmitted directly from parent to offspring less often than is generally supposed, since not more than five to ten per cent of the surviving children of epileptics appeared to have this disease.<sup>7</sup> It is apparent that a family record of epilepsy needs to be interpreted by the specialist and that here, as in other cases, the social situation and the family record regarding mental disorders other than epilepsy must also have consideration.

(3) *Alcoholism*. Without question the repeated appearance of alcoholism in an ancestral line is a complex problem not to be understood by assuming that it was directly inherited. On the other hand, not only is alcoholism believed by many to injure the germ plasm but

<sup>5</sup> Rosenau, *op. cit.*, p. 655.

<sup>6</sup> C. W. Burr, "Heredity in Epilepsy, A Study of 1,449 Cases," *Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry*, Vol. VII, No. 6, pp. 237-40.

<sup>7</sup> *Boston Medical & Surgical Journal*, Vol. CLXXIV, No. 16, p. 573, and "Epilepsy in Offspring of Epileptics," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. I, No. 4, pp. 613-28.

it is also held that its occurrence is suggestive of an inherited predisposition or a trend toward some form of mental instability. In an analysis of ancestral cases of alcoholism there is special need of considering the significance of the social situation. The experiments that have been made in an effort to discover the effects of alcohol upon the inheritance of animals have been extensive but at the present time do not yield the clear precision that science seeks.<sup>8</sup>

(4) *Cancer*. As one would suppose, there is no certainty at present regarding the significance of the inheritance of cancer. It is a disease concerning which our knowledge is merely beginning, and until we know more about it there is bound to be controversy regarding the degree to which inheritance influences its appearance. The elaborate study of Hoffman gives statistical evidence that is clearer in regard to the environmental factors that favor its appearance than concerning the influence of heredity.<sup>9</sup> Since it is an affliction that appears in old age, the question is bound up with the age distribution of the population. As undoubtedly many individuals predisposed to cancer die at an early age before having opportunity to reveal their hereditary tendencies, it is impossible statistically to discover the quantity of susceptibility of men and women to the development of cancer. Some regard the evidence conclusive that not only is the cancer tendency inherited but that it also carries a predisposition to a definite form of cancer.

In the study of cancer there has been much experimenting with animals, especially with mice, and the results of this appear to demonstrate that under definite circumstances a predisposition to the disease is transmitted. In spite of the extreme susceptibility to cancer that has been bred into certain races of mice, it is generally believed that there is no reason to suppose that there are any human beings who are predestined to develop cancer, regardless of their condition. Jennings thinks it probable that with better knowledge and control of the environmental influences that produce cancer we shall make as much headway in the control of this disease as we have with tuberculosis.<sup>10</sup> It is surely difficult for an individual attempting to interpret the meaning of the appearance of cancer in his ancestral line to come to a decision that will show him whether or not he can safely marry.

<sup>8</sup> H. S. Jennings, *Biological Basis of Human Nature*, pp. 335-37.

<sup>9</sup> F. L. Hoffman, *Mortality from Cancer Throughout the World*.

<sup>10</sup> Jennings, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

The problem involves the family record regarding the length of life of the cancer victims, the significance of the environment in all the known cases as it acted to bring irritation to the part of the body that developed the disease, the number of cancer cases in direct or in allied lines of descent, and also the cancer record of the family to which the prospective mate belongs.

(5) *Insanity*. The term insanity is an unfortunate one because it disguises the problems involved in a discussion of inheritance. It is a mere legal designation which decides the responsibility of the individual for his own decisions. The real meaning of the question, Can I, with insanity in my family, safely marry? is, What significance for my contemplated marriage have mental disorder and mental disease as they have appeared in my ancestral line?

There is no such thing as *Mental Disease*. Instead we have a multitude of afflictions roughly divided into the structural and functional forms of mental trouble. Regarding some of them there is clear evidence that there is no substantial hereditary problem involved. For example, paresis, which accounts for a considerable proportion of insanity, is caused only by syphilis, and therefore it is in the same category as its cause. On the other hand, evidence regarding the hereditary character of Huntington's chorea seems decisive.

It is apparent that in any effort to analyze the meaning of the appearance of a mental disorder, that is, some form of mental disease, adequate interpretation of the ancestral record requires knowledge of the types of malady that have appeared as well as knowledge regarding their hereditary or non-hereditary character. What one frequently finds in a suspicious family record is not the persistency of any one sort of mental or neurological disorder but a history of recurring mental instability taking diverse forms such as alcoholism, crime, epilepsy, feeble-mindedness, as well as mental diseases. This suggests bad inheritance and will lead the prudent to seek the advice of the specialist before running any risk of parenthood.

(6) *Feeble-mindedness*. The lowest form of feeble-mindedness is associated with sterility so that idiocy, strictly defined, does not appear in the direct line of ancestors except when it is the result of environmental influences such as an accident, an infection destroying brain cells, or the dementia of old age.

Not long ago nearly all feeble-mindedness was supposed to be the



result of defective strains transmitted directly by inheritance. The one-time interpretation of the Juke and the Kallikak families was based upon this idea. More recently it has been recognized that not only is an enormous amount of feeble-mindedness caused by environmental influences, such as birth injury, but even that the endocrine glands are sometimes the full explanation of brain deficiency. The problem of the appearance of amentia is complicated because when it has hereditary significance it is not a simple, single-pair gene situation but a bad combination of genes, and is influenced also by unfavorable environmental conditions. Moreover, intelligence is in terms of *more* or *less* and passes from genius to idiocy by slight gradations. There is, however, no doubt that the genes furnished by certain individuals are inferior strains while those of others are superior. Unless feeble-mindedness appearing in a recent generation is clearly of environmental influence, the right of marriage is questionable, and that of parenthood more so.

The significance of favorable conditions. In all of these problems and others of similar character the significance of unwholesome and of favorable social situations needs ever to be kept in mind. Tuberculosis may or may not appear in spite of hereditary trends. Mental breakdown may or may not occur in spite of an imperfect family record, according to the help or hindrance the organism receives as it attempts to carry on its activities. Poverty, overwork, intemperance, ignorance, and unhappiness all contribute to the appearance of unhealthy minds and bodies, and this must be recognized in any deliberation concerning the rightness or wrongness of an individual marriage. Not only does much depend upon the social and health history of the ancestors but also upon the hostility or favorableness to mental or physical soundness of the conditions that matrimony will actually bring forth.

The Legislative Committee of the American Eugenics Society advocates the following program.

## I—LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM FOR THE STATES

Laws relating to marriage:

1. Minimum age for marriage. At first this can feasibly be made only one to two years higher than the age stipulated in the state. Sixteen years is the goal to be sought. There should be provision for specific



exception by order of some appropriate court. (The court to be designated will vary according to the nomenclature of the several states.)

2. Require formal application for marriage license at least five days before its issuance with provision for exception by a specified court in special cases.

3. Where there is a period of delay already provided as to the granting or use of marriage licenses, the next step should be to provide that the required period shall be counted from the time of a compulsory publication of the intention in the official county newspaper of each applicant.

4. Persons of more distant kinship than first cousins or of those connected by marriage but not by heredity should not be forbidden to marry. First cousins should be allowed to marry only on approval by an expert in heredity who is listed by the State Board of Health as such.

5. The grounds for divorce should be widened to include besides adultery, the following: insanity, epilepsy, feeble-mindedness, desertion, and sterility (except when the result of old age).

#### Laws relating to the institutional hereditarily unfit:

6. State authorization by approved physicians to sterilize a person who is insane, feeble-minded, epileptic, one with inherited blindness or deafness or other very serious inherited defect, when desired by such persons or guardian. The approval of such proposed operation and operator by a deputy appointed by the State Board of Health for such purpose is required.

7. More adequate appropriations for the building and maintenance of institutions for the segregation of the feeble-minded, insane, epileptic, and defective delinquents.

8. Greater limitation of the pardoning power of the governor.

9. Granting of paroles to criminals only after a competent consideration of the nature of the individual case as a possible social and hereditary menace.

#### Laws relating to contraceptives:

10. State authorization for physicians to prescribe contraceptive materials or devices to their married patients.

11. Authorization for the sale of such (contraceptive) materials on such prescriptions and the necessary replenishing of such supplies by druggists for such purposes.

#### Child labor:

12. A law regulating child labor. This also can feasibly be made only one or two years higher than the existing law in any state. The goal

should be to extend regulation up to sixteen years, but this does not mean complete suppression of all child labor below sixteen years. (This is included not as a euthenic measure with which we are sympathetic, but as a definitely eugenic measure since large families are encouraged in the very poor in regions where child labor is easily exploited.)

## II—FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

1. Application of the state legislative program elsewhere described to the District of Columbia.
2. The increase of the exemption per child in the income tax to \$1,500.

Immigration regulation:

3. Restriction of immigration to those who are superior to the median American in intelligence tests as well as fulfilling such other qualifications as are now imposed.
4. Extension of the quota system to North and South America.
5. Registration of all aliens and the extension of deportation provisions.<sup>11</sup>

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## CHAPTER V

### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SEX APPEAL

Nothing is more obvious at present in the field of human relationships than what may best be described as sex attraction. It is one of the most common, most spontaneous and most consequential of the various forms of attraction that arise in human society. It is idealized in poetry, has become the motive of a large part of our literary output, especially of fiction, appears constantly as news in our papers, and about it gather many of the conventions of the period.

It is rather surprising that science knows so little about a form of human behavior of such unmistakable importance. In the past, in so far as it has been given attention, it has been catalogued under the term instinctive, with the assumption that this sufficiently explained it. Often it is only treated as an instinct in the figurative way of which Bernard writes.<sup>1</sup> At other times it is regarded as a genuine instinct. The meagerness of such an instinct as the psychologists find it in early childhood shows how far away this phenomenon of mutual attraction is from its original root, even if it can be said to be in any sense a derivative of the sex instinct.

If the word instinct is defined with accuracy, it only leads to misunderstanding to consider the sex appeal that normally starts in adolescence as the expression of a specific, inherited, automatic pattern of response. The history of human development, as we now are able to trace it from the simple society of the more primitive man, gives no basis for such an idea. We do not find anything that resembles present sex attraction commonly operating among the savages. Sex appeal with them, though far from the instinctive reaction of the animal, is at a great distance from the complexities and the idealization that are normally found in modern youth. Physical sex passion undoubtedly is present, as it was in the period of primitive man, but it appears now as one element in a consolidation of various lines of interests toward which the life experiences from early childhood have

<sup>1</sup> L. L. Bernard, *Introduction to Social Psychology*, pp. 126-127.



led the individual. If this were not so, mating among humans would remain relatively simple, yielding without special attention a large measure of success.

It is the impossibility of this simplicity of mating occurring on a complex plane of social life that explains the complications of the love experience which have so bountifully furnished material for the playwright and the novelist. Even when in special cases physical appeal pushes aside the other elements of the consolidation, it offers in spite of its strength no assurance of satisfactory mating. This is so true that in common thought the predominance of the physical element has come to be thought of as a bad omen, a prophecy of an unhappy and temporary relationship. It is, therefore, useless to treat human sex attraction as it now occurs as in any sense instinctive.

Probably for the most part the thought in the minds of those who write on the instinct of love or the instinct of sex attraction in human relationships is the strength of the experience and the normality of its appearance. The least analysis, however, brings at once to the surface countless reasons for this in the life of every individual. Contact with others from the days of the cradle becomes a means of building emotional responses and emotional desires that irresistibly lead toward the love interests that commonly show in the behavior of the adolescent.

No one questions the fact that in these reactions sex has a large place and that the hunger of the mature body provides an incentive that leads toward courtship and marriage, nor can there be any question that sex appeal, as we find it among modern men and women, carries on in a more subtle and evolved fashion the same purpose accomplished by an instinct among animals. But this does not justify the belief, still altogether too frequent, that the love attraction of humans is merely the same thing as the mating impulse characteristic of animals on a somewhat lower plane of experience. It is true, as Darwin made so clear, that we not only have courtship among the animals but that it plays a large rôle in sex selection. Even this, however, is a response-relationship utterly alien to anything we find among the most simple or crude of human beings. The animal behavior is suggestive of the elaborate rôle of courtship on the human level of experience, but it is of a different order than that which leads to the mating of men and women, and no advantage comes of the attempt to interpret the latter as simple, instinctive behavior. No one realized



this better than Darwin, who was the first to do justice to the significance of animal courtship. His caution against mixing the human and the animal traits, here as elsewhere, however, has not always been followed by his disciples.

It is useless to turn to the animal for insight in the effort to understand human sex appeal as we now have it. Even the study of the more simple behavior of preliterate people helps little in the understanding of the sex appeal characteristic of modern life.

**Difficulty of analysis.** The importance of the impulses that lead to human mating has long been recognized and it is therefore at first surprising that we have so little knowledge regarding this most interesting and noticeable of all human relationships. The fact is that science has only of late made any beginning in the gathering of accurate knowledge concerning the various aspects of courtship. It is not, however, only in this special field of relationships that we have to recognize the meagerness of scientific knowledge. The same situation appears if we turn to the study of the parent and child relationship or to the other intimate contacts of the family. Friendship has been all but absolutely neglected, and therefore concerning that relationship also we have almost no scientific knowledge.

These various forms of intimate association are not separate but so interrelated that, had we more understanding of any one of them, it would throw light upon the others. For example, sex appeal is unquestionably influenced by the child-parent relationship. Already we know this in some detail. This insight that has come chiefly from psychiatry helps us better to understand courtship. The same is true of such knowledge as we have of the other intimate relationships of the family and of the association of children with each other. All of these relationships appear in the composite which expresses the individual's characteristic sex appeal and response, and information gathered concerning any of them helps us to understand the love attraction.

Our present lack of knowledge regarding these various relationships is not altogether due to the indifference of science although naturally psychology at first tackled the behavior problems that were more mechanical and less personal in their operation. The chief explanation of our lack of factual knowledge is the special difficulty the investigator encounters wherever he tries the analysis of any of the more intimate associations of human beings. Not only is there reti-

cence which proves a difficult barrier to cross, but even when the scientist receives perfect frankness and coöperation there still remains the possibility of rationalization on the part of the giver of information, against which good intent by no means protects, and also a complexity that would baffle one in any sort of investigation.

The reason why rationalization cannot be surely eliminated even though it is recognized as a hazard by the giver of information is that it is impossible for any one of us to commit ourselves whole-heartedly to a relationship and at the same time to take a critical and self-examining attitude toward it. In attempting analysis of an intimate relationship we have to go back to it through retrospection. In this process new influences intrude which make an objective examination of our past experiences almost impossible. On the other hand, the investigator who merely observes us without entering into the emotional fabric of our behavior gathers only partial knowledge of our reactions which, by being isolated from our emotions, are liable to be distorted and misinterpreted.

The problem is even more difficult, for there are experiences of great consequence complicating our associations, according to the findings of most of the specialists working in this field, that can best be handled by assuming the hypothesis of the unconscious. This means that even were it possible for us to make a true report of our motives, our desires, and the compelling forces that operate upon us, we would still be imperfect witnesses, since much that accounts for our conduct is usually hidden from us and can be brought to consciousness only by special technique and effort. The more intimate and complex the relationship, the greater the significance of this element that comes to us out of the past in such a way that ordinarily we do not recognize it.

The problem of sex is a synthetic one, and if progress is to be made there must be a pooling of information from various scientific fields. The results that have been obtained in the study of the child-parent relationship suggest what we may expect from a concerted effort to interpret love. In the former effort science has gone so far in its understanding of the child and the parent as to contribute insight of great value in dealing with family problems and to make possible the development of the Child Guidance Clinic, which in its short period of service has developed an efficient, scientific technique. The success of the Child Guidance Clinic has at least in part resulted from the

recognition that the problems of family relationships are in large degree the sources of the difficulties appearing in the lives of parents and children. These clinics have contributed information of concern to the student of marriage since the complexity of the problems of courtship has at last been revealed through the study of family maladjustments, whereas in the past marriage failure has been too often considered by itself without regard to the entire situation created by the sex career of the individual.

**Intelligent consideration.** There appears to be no hope of reducing human mating to a logical formula, a process of calculation, and there is no reason to suppose that this would be an advantage even if it were possible to accomplish. The few instances that we have in this country in which marriage has been entered upon with a cool estimation of possible profit and loss do not encourage the idea that mating would yield more human happiness if only it were carried on in the spirit of business. We revolt against any suggestion of external motive in mating. The willingness to put aside attraction and to substitute motives of material or social advantage seems a prostitution of normal impulse and only by a radical change in our ideals of marriage can any other attitude become acceptable. Under the prevailing social conventions we are led toward marriage by yearning rather than by calculation.

Although any attempt to put in the place of sex attraction motives of finance or ambition is incompatible with our ideas of marriage, it does not follow that the mating impulse needs to be or safely can be devoid of intelligence. The surrender to blind passion in the making of a marriage choice seems to be nearly as hazardous as allowing the marriage to be motivated by pecuniary consideration or social design. Here as elsewhere the golden mean between the two extremes proves the best pathway to happiness.

Sex appeal, once it is thoroughly awakened, pushes aside any effort at analysis, and therefore the part intelligence plays best is preparatory. As soon as the emotion of love flows strongly resistance is exerted against any form of attack, and the endeavor to scrutinize the experience is interpreted by the individual as making war upon it. Clearly the opportunity for judgment lies in the building of a background which will have a decisive influence upon sex interest, directing it in its beginning before it becomes firmly fixed upon any individual. In other words, sex attraction is not a detached, alien element

in the life of the individual which, suddenly springing up full-grown, forces the person toward a relationship out of accord with his ordinary choices.

The entire personality is the background out of which sex appeal develops, in the same way that other sorts of association develop. Physical sex is more prominent in this special relationship than in any other and with it go emotions and urges not clearly recognized by consciousness, but this does not mean that it has a complete monopoly. That this is true is not only a belief built upon common observation, it is also established by the conviction of any one who explores his attitude toward marriage before, during or after matrimony. The psychic element has a large place even in an attraction which draws heavily on physical urges and seems irresistible. It is this that makes mating complicated and distinguishes human experience from that of the animal.

There is, therefore, a place for intelligence in the personality background out of which sex attraction has to emerge. The value of thought comes not so much as a means of building up a list of demands to be made of the man or woman who appears as a possible candidate for marriage but in exploring the likes and dislikes, the appeals and repulsions, the demands and expectations that genuinely belong to the individual himself. Although its value in the other direction is not entirely negligible, intelligence helps most as it leads to self-knowledge and sincerity, nor does this signify what is commonly called selfishness but rather the honesty and justice upon which every successful relationship has to rest. Nothing could be more unfair than to form a life alliance in the expectation that the husband or wife satisfy the demands made by the other with a personality that had from the first no possibility of accomplishing this.

When we take so seriously what we call sex appeal it seems rather strange that there is so little effort, practically none at all, to help young persons to become familiar with the meaning of an impulse that has so much to do with their happiness and success, or to give them some clew that will permit them to become familiar with their own cravings, standards and expectations. Warnings sometimes are received from those who are older, but even this prudential counsel is seldom of any value as a means of helping the younger person to know his own needs. On the other hand it may act as an inhibition which makes it difficult for the individual to trust sex attraction once



it arises in his life, and this is likely to prove detrimental rather than helpful. It is clear that in some cases the advice of the father or mother regarding marriage and matrimonial choice, particularly in the case of the daughter, has been entirely negative, not only creating distrust when sex appeal was first strongly felt but passing over into the marriage relationship itself—if a wedding finally occurred—and becoming a source of doubt which destroyed the confidence indispensable to a true union. The purpose of intelligence in the mating experience is not to act as a check upon passion, a conception far too often held, but to clarify the experiences that influence choice and to interpret the needs that require fulfillment for matrimonial success.

**Personal history.** Once thought is attracted to the career of the individual as it has to do with the mating impulse, unexpected discoveries often result. Usually there is nothing one understands so little as the significance of childhood and youth in conditioning impulses that lead toward marriage. Sometimes, as psychoanalytic literature reveals, influences that operate with strength, leading to attraction toward one type of individual and recoil from another, are exceedingly trivial and not worthy of the importance they actually have. It is also true, as the sociologist tells us, that the influences that command the individual at certain levels of his development are often temporary and serve better as a means of growth of personality than as a decisive influence over choice. Here comes the hazard of premature decision. Most individuals who have arrived at a successful matrimonial relationship look back to earlier experiences and recognize the appearance in their career of sex attraction which, had it been followed seriously, would have led to precipitate commitment. Happiness could have been achieved only by checking the development that one or both of the personalities involved later attained.

**The sex set.** As the body moves toward maturity the individual also gathers through experience psychic results that appear in his preferences, forming what may be called the *sex set*. If the body chiefly furnishes the momentum toward mating, by the physiological and chemical accompaniments of puberty, the direction which this yearning takes is largely determined by the sex set or complex. This is an accumulation in which influences from many different sorts of experiences and from different periods of time appear. Difficult as it is to reduce the sex set to the elemental influences that built it up, it has of late become of great interest to the psychoanalytic student and



the psychologist, and already a beginning has been made in the technique of its analysis so that each individual career can in some measure receive interpretation. Undoubtedly, those who are willing to make full use of the resources of science in the hands of a skilled specialist, well-balanced and constructive in attitude, are given an extraordinary understanding of their own sex desire and needs and a tolerance which goes far to make any individual marriage successful.

There are two terms common in modern literature that stress the importance of the sex set. We speak of *falling in love* and *love at first sight*. Both of these phrases bear tribute to the spontaneity of the appearance of sex attraction and its concentration upon the individual of the opposite sex. The experience often arises suddenly without any apparent warning and is accompanied by an almost irresistible craving for the comradeship of the person who has awakened the impulse. Although the infatuation seems entirely new, unrelated to anything that has preceded it, this does not hold true when it is seriously investigated. The explosion, to be sure, has been sparked off by an individual who would seem to be the full explanation of what has occurred, but as a matter of fact the energy involved in this first clear emergence of strong attraction has a more elaborate origin than is at first evident. The explanation of the peculiar appeal of the particular individual issues from the life history of the lover and literally stretches backward to the earliest events of childhood, even, according to Freud, to infancy itself. There was present, as Stekel states, a readiness for love, which if traced to its source carries back in part to the evolutionary history of the race and in part to a particularizing of the impulse which we understand only as we become familiar with the personal career of the individual.

It is not too much to say that there is an almost universal tension in late adolescence which prepares for the emotional experience that we call "falling in love." In this period there seems to be an ideal, usually vague in form, which makes it possible for any one of the opposite sex who can stimulate the secret thought of a desirable mate to bring forth this emotional outburst.

The experience must not be thought of as exclusively erotic. On the contrary, he who seeks sex pleasure by itself denies himself this superior form of attraction. He who has been brought to this outpouring of emotion craves a unique relationship in which fellowship with the personality of his beloved dominates. The man and the

woman seek each other in a comradeship unparalleled in its intensity and in the grip it has on the desires of each. The fact that there is an underlying biological purpose does not in any degree change the quality of the experience. The meaning it has for the individual is independent of the part it plays in the scheme of human survival. Its significance for the person caught by it has best been interpreted by modern poetry, in which it has been credited with a supremacy over all other human relationships. This has resulted not from the effort to magnify it but from an honest attempt to interpret what actually is felt by the man or woman when it is first experienced.

**Influence of social circumstances.** In spite of the fact that there is commonly a preparedness, which rests on a biological foundation, for the outbreaking of an intense love desire, this craving is subject to environmental influences. The man who has broken away from his family and finds himself lonely in the midst of many acquaintances, none of whom give him any serious degree of friendship, is made all the more ready for the outburst. He who feels alienated from parents or friends who once gave him the intimate response human nature craves is, unless hardened by disillusion, quicker to respond to the individual who suggests his ideal. Likewise association with some one passing through the experience of love quickens the desire to feel the same emotion. Thus suggestion plays a part but usually without being recognized by those who are given greater readiness for the experience through contact with others who are thoroughly captivated by it.

**Advance in selection.** The maturing of sex appeal goes hand in hand with emotional development. The sex set does not mean a generalized responsiveness to any member of the opposite sex but a craving that is increasingly selective and specific. It is true that in mild degree there is a spread of responsiveness which makes almost every member of the opposite sex, especially within the appropriate age class, slightly stimulating and attractive, but this in no sense resembles the kind of experience that comes with the lover's reaction. Choice becomes more and more exacting and the craving for an exclusive personal relationship grows stronger as the emotion matures.

It is not difficult, as those who explore human nature tell us, for individuals to fall back upon earlier and less exacting emotional reactions. When the impulse toward the love response is absent, or when the unwise parent or teacher has built up resistance to the emo-

tion so that its appearance brings conflict, individuals retreat to an easier and more childish attitude. Among the possibilities is the development of the habit of treating the man or woman in whom interest is felt not as a fulfillment of genuine yearning for a life mate but merely as a means of temporary pleasure. As a consequence, the seeking of the lesser destroys the desire for the higher form of comradeship. Some are satisfied with physical passion while others are content to tie themselves up with a person from whom they get parasitic support, a tendency suggestive of the infant, or to enjoy love of power as an antidote for a constant sense of inferiority.

By such processes the normal flow of emotion is diverted into all sorts of morbid and neurotic expressions. It is this field the psychoanalyst has worked most extensively. The averting and perverting of the love attraction does not merely register during courtship but, to the disaster of the union, continues even after the matrimonial commitment has been made. The only escape comes from an emotional reconstruction which harmonizes inner conflict and brings the individual to greater maturity. Unfortunately, this is not only difficult but seldom desired. The entire situation is misinterpreted and either blame is thrown upon the partner in the mating experience or everything pertaining to love is looked at as a mere illusion.

Rarely is the child given an honest, not to say an intelligent, preparedness for his adolescent experience by his parents, and it speaks well for the vigor of the experience that it is not more often turned toward an unwholesome expression. Here as elsewhere soundness is a matter of degree. Few there are who escape altogether the handicaps in love attraction and response that result from unwise example, false teaching or neglect.

At best modern love has to hurdle over a good many barriers in the form of inhibitions that have accumulated during the process of growing up. The love prerequisites, as Stekel suggests, become more exacting with the social refinement of love.<sup>2</sup> Sex attraction cannot be detached and left on a primitive level while life in its other aspects goes forward to heightened complexity and larger expectations. The physical component is overshadowed by psychic determinants so that not only is the attraction and response experience complicated but at any time the feeling aroused may be transformed into its opposite and

<sup>2</sup> W. Stekel, *Frigidity in Woman*, Vol. I, p. 31.

repulsion take the place of convergence. Also, if there be emotional disturbance due to guilt feeling, suspicion or inferiority feeling, the relationship may lead to an intellectual reaction even more biased and torn in conflict than feeling itself.

This is so true that Stekel believes that a person of culture yields to the sex urge only when overwhelmed, but that this struggle between feeling-toward and retreat-from, which is brought forth by the antagonism of culture and passion, is not clearly in consciousness but belongs to what he designates as the realm of the foreconscious.

Without committing ourselves to this psychoanalytic interpretation we can recognize that culture necessarily widens the area through which sex attraction must travel and makes it possible for the love attraction to step aside from the pathway so clear for the preliterate on their less exacting social level.

It might seem as if the solution to this were to keep the attraction a thing by itself, untouched by modern culture. This practice, even when attempted, proves impossible. The love feeling issues out of the entire personality. Everything that influences us as we live in present civilization becomes a potential contributor to our love attitude. Consciousness expands with mental growth and this extension of personality enters every relationship and most of all that of parent and child, and of lover and beloved. As a consequence, there is no escape from bringing the entire content of personality gathered from the social environment of a definite time and place into the relationship which the ego seeks with overwhelming desire.

Here also we find the baneful influences originating from particular mishaps during childhood. A common example of this is the relation between the son and the unhappy mother who turns from dissatisfaction in marriage to an exaggeration of the parent-child relationship. Out of such an experience the boy may develop loss of desire to marry or may come to covet the mother type in his mate so that matrimony only strengthens and extends the character weakness that was built into him from infancy.

**Influence of the home.** Parents have long expressed the important part that family life plays in forming attitudes that help or hinder marriage, but it is only of late that we have begun to realize the intricacies of the problem. The influence of the family is not simple nor wholly on the surface. As Jung tells us, the relationship



of parent and child leads to various sorts of love reactions, each of which has to be studied in its specific setting and development.<sup>3</sup>

We have gained insight into this most complicated of emotional relationships by case studies and by various sorts of questionnaires. Case histories are impressive although generalization is difficult, since each career is unique, and it is difficult even to classify the elements common among different persons. Investigation by questionnaires likewise is handicapped since it has to depend upon the opinion of the individual making the report and, as psychology so strongly emphasizes, the actual facts of parental relationship that have had influence upon the son or daughter during courtship or marriage are likely not to be realized or at least not to be estimated according to their true importance. To use the psychoanalytic vocabulary, the significant reactions of parents and children at this point are likely not to be conscious and for that reason the judgment of the individual who acts as an interpreter of his own experience is not to be trusted.

**Two fundamental types.** In their fundamental love attitudes there are people who fall into the two classes to which Freud has given the terms the *narcissistic* type and the *dependence* type.<sup>4</sup> In the first, love of self is projected upon some other person. Emotion is first settled upon the self, or on some quality of the self, then transferred to some one brought forward by the process of identification or by the principle of association. This love response represents an arrest of self-development due to the stress of the ego in the erotic reaction to life. Affection is drawn toward some one who reflects the self. This type is tempted toward homosexual affection because often those of the same sex seem most like one's self. Narcissistic love also appears in parents who look upon children as merely the enlargement of their own personality. The husband or the wife also may develop affection for the mate because he or she sees in the other qualities that the person cannot without protest of conscience idealize in himself or herself.

Dependency is another sort of defective love development. The individual looks to another for the means to fulfill his own needs. Affection settles upon some one who can be made an instrument of ego satisfaction. This dependency attitude results from the inability of the individual to depart from the infantile conditions characteristic

<sup>3</sup> Count H. Keyserling, *The Book of Marriage*, p. 350.

<sup>4</sup> J. C. Flügel, *The Psycho-analytic Study of the Family*, p. 103.



of the time when by attaching himself to his mother or some other relative he found the security his affection demanded. The dependent individual, never having matured out of this clinging to some one else, uses his later love experiences as a means of support in the hopeless effort to find in mate or friend the love status of childhood. The influences that lead to the choice of the person upon whom he fixes his affection are of course not consciously recognized by the individual himself.

There is a third fundamental type which can best be described as the mature heterosexual. They seek neither duplication nor a parasitic prop, but a fellowship which recognizes the need of individuality and leads to mutual justice in the marriage relationship. Such an idea of matrimony is obviously beyond the attainment of either of the first two types, and yet it is the only program in accord with present social trends. This explains many of the failures to achieve matrimonial adjustment.

**The love fetish.** In the analysis of sex appeal we must recognize the significance of the love fetish, even though the information we have regarding it comes primarily from extreme or abnormal life histories. A fetish, as the word is used in this connection, is a quality, physical or mental, belonging to another person which has an extraordinary sex appeal for the man or woman whom it attracts. Sex pleasure is tied up with specific possessions belonging to the other individual. Stekel in considerable detail discusses the significance of hair, eyes, odor, mouth, voice, stature, size, hands, feet, form, and complexion as fetishes that have for various individuals marked erotic appeal.

The difficulty of estimating the significance of the fetish comes from our lack of knowledge as to whether it constitutes an unusual if not an abnormal attraction, or whether in slighter degree we are all influenced in our love attachments by personal preferences which have fetish elements and which, when developed out of all proportion, become overwhelming in their appeal. Probably every one is somewhat influenced by personality qualities, at least in so far as they direct attention to some one of the opposite sex who then becomes separated from those to whom we are indifferent. These characteristics, when they are favorable in their suggestion, encourage acquaintanceship and provide an opportunity, when other conditions are propitious, for love to start. There can be no doubt that each of us has his likes

and dislikes of traits found in others, reactions by some people exaggerated into fetishes, and that these preferences and aversions play at least a minor rôle in our choices of acquaintances and friends, but it seems clear that normal individuals do not go so far as to fall in love with physical features or mental qualities.

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## CHAPTER VI

### THE MEANING OF COURTSHIP

**Modern courtship.** Conventional courtship as it now exists in this country is not only modern, it is distinctly Anglo-Saxon in tradition. Although it harks back to English origin, it is a native cultural trait characteristic of the civilization of Canada and the United States. The statement commonly found in the writings of anthropologists a decade or more ago, that romantic love is never found among primitive peoples, is an exaggeration, but if too sweeping to do justice to the occasional exception it correctly interprets the usual facts. The love life of primitive man, as we find it in existing savage society, is meager and devoid of the emotional qualities associated with American courtship.<sup>1</sup>

We know from investigation carefully made by scientists who have resided long enough in savage tribes to come to know the people intimately that their love experiences, at least in some instances, are not so simple as was formerly thought and are not entirely destitute of features suggestive of modern courtship.<sup>2</sup> The matter-of-fact attitude toward sex and marriage, the lack of the refinement of emotion characteristic of complex society, and the social and physical difficulties that limit association between even neighboring tribes, lessening the opportunity for love-making, all tend to restrict the development of the convention of courtship.<sup>3</sup>

Nor can courtship flourish under a system that gives the parent the power of arranging marriage for the children. It presupposes freedom of choice on the part of youth and of course has no function when marriage is a matter of settlement between the families involved. At the present time the protest expressed by a portion of Oriental youth against the parent-arranged type of marriage in the effort to achieve courtship privileges is becoming a cause of considerable strain between young people and their elders in the Far East.

<sup>1</sup> F. Müller-Lyer, *The Evolution of Modern Marriage*, pp. 41-51.

<sup>2</sup> Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, Chap. 7.

<sup>3</sup> R. Briffault, *The Mothers*, Vol. I, pp. 560-561.

Courtship as we know it in this country is germane to our form of marriage, and neither of these social conventions could exist without the other. Courtship, therefore, must not be considered as an experience by itself, for it is organically related to matrimony. It is not enough to think of it as a means of entrance into an engagement and marriage, it is also an experience that contributes to the prevailing idea of marriage and may be properly thought of as preparatory in function. Thus the world-wide trend toward monogamic marriage based upon free choice carries with it irresistibly the spread of the more mature form of courtship.

**Various aspects of courtship.** It is necessary to speak of the purposes of courtship rather than the purpose, since it performs various functions in contemporary love experience. For the great majority of American youth it has a large significance, since it furnishes momentum which leads to the first substantial breaking of home ties. Although the child is not necessarily alienated from his parents, he is led away from the concentration of interest and affection which has prevailed during childhood. This is in part an age phenomenon. The time has come in the development of the adolescent for the lessening of his dependence on the home if he is to achieve a self-directing personality. The appearance of this change in the life of boy or girl commonly comes before the emergence of any strongly felt love reaction. Nevertheless, the break from the family group and the awakening of the love craving of courtship roughly correspond in time and are usually closely associated.

For many young people, especially girls, the realization of the need of an independent life breaks forth with the first serious flowing of the love emotion, especially if parental policy is such as to hamper the child's freedom or to antagonize the interest in boys of which for the first time the girl has become fully conscious. It complicates courtship to have allied with it so consequential a phase of the child's development as this breaking away from the home. It would help the young person in passing the perils of these two different experiences if each could be dealt with by itself, but this cannot be. Not only do they appear at approximately the same time in the process of development, but they are sure to coalesce and become allied influences in the growth toward maturity.

Courtship has come to have such a large place in the life of modern youth that it seems to reveal the essential nature of the adolescent



period. For various reasons, among which the chemical and physical changes taking place in the body are prominent, the entire life of the adolescent is normally highly emotional. Courtship provides for this emotional stress an expression which, without doubt, lessens tension at other points.

In any case adolescence would be a period of idealization, but the tendency toward this is strengthened by interest in love and, in the latter part of the period, by interest in marriage. It must not be thought that idealization and daydreaming come exclusively from the mating impulses, for hero worship, rivalry in sports, and, in the recent past at least, the appeal of war, have also brought forth idealization. From this point of view courtship is only the supreme expression of youth's most characteristic reaction to life.

Unfortunately, in the average American this romantic expression flares up and quickly fades away. As a consequence it is not true, as Emerson suggested, that every one loves a lover, for this outbreak of idealization in youth frequently meets with ridicule, opposition and contempt from the disillusioned middle-aged individual who cannot bring back to memory the flavor of his own romantic experiences but who sees in courtship nothing else than the deception which, looking backward, he discovers in his own career and resents.

Literature is full of illustrations of the cynicism that comes from the disillusionment of youth betrayed by the romance of love. Even though it registers a very common, if not the most common, conviction of the middle-aged, this interpretation does scant justice to the social meaning of the experience.

It is true that idealization frequently lifts expectation too high and creates a problem of adjustment to reality which many can never successfully meet. But this does not tell the whole story. It is also true that the incentives that lead to high achievement in matrimony are tied up with this romantic outburst. The ideals of marriage are pushed forward by the intensity of desire, the vision and the vows that come so easily to those swayed by love. A curbing of emotion, a lessening of anticipation, would indeed reduce the difficulties of matrimonial adjustment, but only by bringing the experience down to a less exacting level. This explains the increasing significance of courtship which has gone with the evolution of modern marriage. A prosaic, matter-of-course, business-like courtship would squeeze out of the mating experience all possibility of intense, spiritual fellowship.



Only the rare individual fully attains the satisfactions for which hunger arises in this highly emotional period, but the race profits from the strivings that are born of the experiences that advance the ideals of marriage.

Moreover the word disillusionment is hardly a fair statement of what happens to a large portion of those who lose their romantic dreams in adjusting to the realities of life, since what they actually attain they come to value more highly than the earlier visions of their imagination. The large place the love element holds in the thought of modern man is revealed by the fact that the adjustment which life demands here as elsewhere receives more protest in this than in any other field of human interest. Bitterness is felt in regard to the disappointment of marriage even when similar frustrations along other lines are met with resignation or even with a recognition of compensations.

This not only brings out the imperial character of the emotion of love in the life of modern man, but emphasizes the stress that comes with the adolescent's awakening to its importance. A considerable portion of the social revolt against our contemporary civilization is explained by the resentment of those whose love need has been strangled by ambition, concentration on money-making, or domestic responsibilities and the like, and from those who feel that the original love response of husband or wife has been smothered by routine and trivial interests. In other words, a part of the disillusionment which conventional thought charges to the imagination of adolescence should be blamed upon the betrayal of the lover who after entering matrimony permitted himself to be led away from the source of his supreme satisfaction by a concentration on lesser values. Courtship at least keeps youth perennial in its hopes and gives each generation a fresh start toward the love goal. This is the deeper social meaning of what too frequently is interpreted as a mere daydreaming episode in the maturing of the individual.

**Courtship's relation to marriage.** Courtship has significance both as an experience by itself and in its influence upon marriage. In the next chapter we shall discuss problems that come out of the first aspect of courtship. Its highly emotional characteristics give it a fascination, and as a result of this in some cases it antagonizes matrimonial success. There are those who become so fond of the experience, as they train themselves to enjoy the secondary sex ex-

periences connected with it and to be satisfied by its various forms of petting, that they become reluctant to pass forward into the more responsible relationship of marriage. Then there are those who do finally marry but always look backward regretfully, feeling that it was in courtship that they attained the highest levels of emotional satisfaction. The sad fact is that far too commonly they are right, for in their cases the bright coloring of courtship has faded into the dull gray of matrimonial routine. Any emphasis of courtship that makes it an end in itself or causes it to rival later marriage is a perversion of its social function. Unlike experiences cannot be compared, and necessarily marriage and courtship are different in quality. It is as unfortunate for the married individual to find that for him courtship was more emotionally satisfying than marriage as it is for him to hold it to have been a waste of time in reaching the greater happiness of matrimony.

Courtship has significance also as the entrance into marriage, and once the wedding has taken place the distinction between the two periods in the relationship of husband and wife fades away and the association is interpreted as one unbroken intimacy. This also creates problems since what happens in courtship comes to have its greatest significance after marriage. It is important to remember that the opposite is equally true and that many of the problems that arise during courtship and at the time appear serious become meaningless and are forgotten as a consequence of the later happiness that comes with marriage.

To the individual intoxicated with the emotion of love nothing seems less true than to say that his experience is an ordeal, but in truth such it is. It tempts some to stray from the pathway leading to the more mature relationship of marriage and becomes for others, because of its occurrences, an obstacle to happy mating. This last risk must not be thought of as exclusively relating to unconventional or immoral conduct, since the experiences of courtship that may work against a happy union are made significant by the emotional reactions of the individuals concerned and often are actually trivial in character.

**Analysis of courtship functions.** The first step in courtship obviously is the getting acquainted and it is one that some young people find difficult or even impossible. This is a problem that receives at present much less attention than it deserves. The social

success of our modern monogamic system of marriage cannot be tested merely by the happiness of those who marry. The question also must be asked, "How widely is the marriage opportunity distributed?" A comparison with the situation found among people on a plane of more primitive culture discloses that our program at this point is not as successful as theirs. This should be taken for granted for it is the inevitable result of the greater refinement and complexity of modern matrimony and of the greater emphasis upon individual selection in mating. Modern life offers not only an opportunity for either the man or woman who prefers the single life to follow his inclinations but also motives for making such a choice, since with us celibacy as well as marriage has its advantages.

The significance of the time element must be recognized in any discussion of the unmarried. In cases not a few there is no downright decision never to marry, but either a repeated postponement of marriage or a thoughtless setting aside of the adolescent practices that lead to marriage. The significance of this as affecting sex selection will be discussed in greater detail elsewhere, but here we must recognize that courtship can be aborted by failure to get acquainted with individuals of the opposite sex. The following cases are illustrative of this and reveal the protest later felt when it is finally realized that postponement actually meant the surrendering of the chance to marry.

#### *Case 1*

For the last three or four years at least I have been trying to find some solution to my problem, both by cogitation and by observation of other women, and I have arrived nowhere. Furthermore, I have read every article in every magazine I could get hold of, and every book on psychology, etc., that I could get, hoping that some author somewhere might have dropped a hint, even so much as a sentence, dealing with my problem. I cannot find a word on it anywhere, I cannot find that any one has ever dealt with it or even acknowledged its existence as a problem. May I appeal to you, if you know no answer, to tell me whether you know of any one else who has considered it at all and from whom I might get some help?

During 1929 I shall reach my thirty-seventh birthday, and I am not only unmarried and with no visible hopes of a change of state, but I have never been on friendly terms with any man in my life, barring older relatives, doctors, ministers, and the like impersonal contacts. I have never known a man well enough to go anywhere with him or to have him call

at my house. I have never known at all well any girl who had a brother, nor any girl who got married.

Now I am not a prude, a typical old maid to whom sex relations seem undesirable, unclean, unspiritual concessions to lower things. On the contrary, I regard a normal sex life in marriage as being the point where human life is enabled to touch the highest things, the channel through which human beings best serve the Spirit of Life and Truth and Goodness. My observation furthermore has convinced me that the very best brand of service to humanity that can be given by an "old maid" falls short of the value of even the lesser and casual kinds of service given by the married and by young persons whose expectation of marriage is good. (Of course there may be a few great genius-like exceptions.) Those who live a normal human love-life are so much more warm and healthy in their relations with all the world. The *best* an "old maid" can do has such a warped quality in it.

There is nothing that seems so utterly terrible to me as for a woman to dry up in body and soul and become the thing an old maid is. It would be better to die when you were yet young enough not to have dried up. I do not mean that I am so naïve as to think that there is necessarily a greater *happiness* in marriage. But even a very unhappy marriage would give certain things—fuller sympathy, closer union with the life of the race, and (on the lowest terms) at least some kind of comradeship. Better to have some one to scrap with than to have no one to live any sort of life with at all. And if there were children it would mean still more.

Of course, at my age, I don't expect there could be what is usually called "love." The most I could hope for would be the kind of friendship in which two mature persons might spend their later years. (In a way, that is a little too bad, because I feel a lot closer to the much-maligned "younger generation" in spirit than I do to women of my own age, and I have observed that I am more likely to be *persona grata* among the younger women, too.) But I should think that there might be some man, too, who would prize comradeship and a normal family life, and who might think me tolerable at least as a second-best.

But how can I get well enough acquainted with any men to give myself a chance to make myself agreeable to them, or enough so that they can begin to think of me not as another item of furniture but as a human being with whom friendship and perhaps something more might be a possibility? I have read and read everything in the way of personal and psychological advice I can find—and I am supposed to be fairly intelligent too—and I can't find any hints as to how to get acquainted with any men.

Writers always assume that the middle-aged woman has cruelly left be-



hind her a grieving childhood sweetheart to whom she said "no" for the sake of a career. Or they write on the sex problems of the unmarried woman assuming that of course she has had at least opportunities for some manner of sex experience. Or they write advice on how to make oneself agreeable to the young man who has gotten to the stage of calling. Or they analyze the emotional difficulties caused by lack of give-and-take between the already married couple. Or they speak with scorn of the complex-ridden virgin who has avoided men because she thinks sex life distasteful. Not a one ever tells a woman what to do when her attitude to sex is normal, her abilities to make a contribution to marriage at least average, but her skill at the come-hither absolutely non-existent.

Further, all existing social arrangements seem built up on the principle that it is going to require the utmost effort to prevent men and women from becoming too intimate, a fact which terribly handicaps a woman like me. In a university like — there are many more men than women, but when a woman comes into the university community she meets women, and they introduce her to other women, and they to other women, and if she ever meets a man, it is one already married or just about to be. If by mistake introduced to an unmarried man, he mumbles "How do you do" and walks off to attach himself to a stag group from which he can't be lured. I suppose it must be in some way my fault, but I don't see what I do that is wrong. I have asked one or two girls who knew me. One said, "Well, you mustn't be so eager. Wait for them to come to you." But never one comes. I don't think they realize I am anything else but a sheet of paper and a pen.

I won't go on with any more of this. Please, do you know any answer? Had I realized how impossible it was all going to be when I was sixteen or so, I might have spent from five to ten years making note-book observations on other girls' methods (the only trouble is that they do their real work when you can't eavesdrop) and trying every conceivable thing I could think of on every man in sight. Of course I would probably have gotten unkindly talked about, but then I could have gotten work in some place far off from the scene of my experiments, and maybe I'd have had some idea then how really to go about it. But I can't afford ten years now or there'll be no chance for children. And any lesser time wouldn't help much, because I am absolutely at a loss as to how to begin. Is there anything I can do now?

If you think there is nothing I can do and none who could help, then do you know anything I could do to keep from being quite so miserable over it? I have tried working hard, even to exhaustion, and the only result is to make me sure I'll go raving crazy if I can't have a little less intellect and a little more emotion in my life. I have tried unselfish work



to help a friend, worked months to try to help her through a trouble. Of course, I am glad I did it for her sake, but it helped my problem not at all. I can't adopt a child, for two reasons: (1) there is no point in adopting a child if you have to be away from it all day in order to earn money to support it; (2) it is unfair to a child to have an old-maid mother who can't help either drawing on the child for an emotional companionship beyond its years, or else producing a strain in the atmosphere by her effort not to do the child that harm. (I have seen too often what happens to children on whom adults have pulled emotionally. It hurts even animals.)

I can't go into a more feminine and human occupation, such as nursing, social service, kindergarten work, etc., for two reasons: (1) I am now too old to be accepted for training; (2) I am not good with large groups. Besides, considered as a worker merely, I am better where I am. Incidentally, "worker" is the word. No one seems to think of me as having any sex at all, any more than the queen bee or the drones think of the worker bees as having sex. Unfortunately in regard to me this sexlessness is far from actual!

I have no brothers or sisters, and belong to a family in which cousinship means merely acquaintance, if that much. Hence when my parents die (their ages are 79 and 77) I shall be entirely alone in the world, and my emotional life still more utterly starved, if that is possible. So you can see that I cannot solve my problem by interest in nieces and nephews. My nearest girl friends are likewise unmarried and seem content to remain so, so there are no children in sight at all.

Social contacts at church here are solely between members of the same sex. There is no walking club here, and I do not know of any association where men and women may meet. The department has teas, but at them the women group together and so do the men. But these are only the local manifestations of a condition that seems to beset me everywhere I go; and in spite of social conditions, other girls—homelier, stupider, poorer at cooking, knowing less about the duties of wife and mother—manage to get acquainted with men. Please show me a light in the darkness and tell me what is the matter with me and what I can do?

I did not play exclusively with girls when I was a child—there were two boy cousins I played with. But since I was sixteen I have known no members of the opposite sex except those already married or engaged. Also, I was not an only child because my parents preferred to have but one—on the contrary they desired several but had to wait eighteen years before I came.

I do not feel that it is an inferiority in me which has been the cause of my not getting married. I do feel that being unmarried makes any woman inferior. I should scarcely classify most unmarried women I know

as human beings at all. Some of them are cards out of a card catalogue, some are textbooks, some are ramrods, and some are cesspools of morbid thoughts, and some are echoes of the nearest minister. But none are human. It is the fear of being such as they that gives me an aching sense of inferiority. Not that inferiority causes old-maid-dom, but that old-maid-dom is the most loathsome type of inferiority—almost worse than leprosy or some such thing.

Again, I do not think I “switched off the pathway to matrimony” during my college life, and failed to realize the difficulty because of concentration on my work. There wasn’t any pathway to matrimony from which to switch off. Had college life been impossible for me, I would have been left in an environment still more manless than that in which I now am. Furthermore, there never was a time when I was so sunk in intellectual pursuits as to forget the claims of my emotional nature. To be sure, I did not realize quite how desperate the case was. In high school and in college, realizing that there simply were no men around, I strove to satisfy my needs for emotional relationships by deep friendships with my nearest girl friends. But I never have been and I never can be satisfied with intellectual work alone. If I had committed that sin of forgetting the real things because of being buried in my books, I would regard my present condition as God’s just punishment. Furthermore, if I had done that, I would probably be such a card from the card catalogue already as to be incapable of being rescued from the mental traits of old-maid-dom even if I did marry—and I think I could be a normal wife and mother, which certainly would be impossible to any one who had been capable of being sunk in intellectual pursuits without noticing that other things were missing.

Again, I do not see how I can have “established a tradition” of unmarriedness at this university. Of course, I attended college here, but that was ages ago, and I worked here the year of 1914-1915, but aside from that I have been here no more than a few hours on business until last March. And a year seems too short a time for a very fixed tradition to arise. Moreover I have sedulously tried not to go with any old maid crowd here, and even at the risk of being frequently lonely, to encourage none save obviously flapper acquaintances. This is fairly easy, since my own contemporaries think I do not uphold the moral ideals of their generation against modern trends sufficiently (that is, flappers don’t shock me)—and younger girls are a lot more apt to like me than the old maid bunch—a thing I am secretly proud of and very thankful for.

I cannot feel that “accepting the situation” and simply waiting does anything but make a lifelong old maid existence absolutely certain. If in all these years no single possible opening has occurred, certainly the chances

are much less now, unless I *do something different*. And what that is is what I should like to find out. It seems to me that institutes to study social science ought to have something to say on the general problem—perhaps they will some day. I don't know much sociology, but I do know that one reason for the difficulty of my position is a social-order one, beyond my power to alter. It used to be that every girl remained in some home until she had a home of her own. Moreover, she was known in her own community. If she went outside her own community, she went as a guest into some other home where she had a standing. And a man is a lot more likely to think of a girl in connection with sex and marriage, when he sees her in a home environment. When he sees her in an office or a laboratory, he connects her with work, unless she has a remarkable amount of "sex appeal." All our social safeguards as to meetings between the sexes are still based on the (now untrue) theory that unmarried people all have homes where they meet properly, and that all meetings outside of homes must be viewed with suspicion and safeguarded—which results in a kind of natural selection weeding out of all those but the ones with superlative sex appeal. Have you no suggestions as to how a woman might meet men in other than an office or laboratory milieu?

This is a characteristic expression from those who feel a grievance against a social situation which appears to have denied them the opportunity to marry and to have children. It is plain that many of these individuals suffer more than a loss of the fellowship of marriage by the frustration of their sex urge and of their desire to have children. With their experience often goes self-blame and inferiority feeling that is more serious in its effect upon the personality and the wet blanket that it throws over life than is the mere loss of courtship and marriage.

Courtship is also a period of experimentation. It is unwise for the love impulse to become fixed upon an individual of the opposite sex without a considerable association with different sorts of individuals. The young man or woman restricted to few acquaintances, either because of the limitations of environmental circumstances or because of shyness and timidity, is led to overemphasize the first appearance of a possible lover. Here the policy of parents who are overanxious to protect their children from an unwise choice or from the risk of wide acquaintanceship easily obstructs the experimentation that normally goes with adolescence. The following case is an illustration of this.

*Case 2*

We children were not allowed to visit for an afternoon unless mother visited the home too. We could, however, have as many of our friends play in our yard as cared to come, because mother knew what was going on most of the time. We had pets and playthings and so never lacked for friends to help us enjoy them. I wore my brother's clothes from the time I returned from school until time to retire. I attended a private school from the time I entered school until I began to teach. My maiden aunt conducted the school. We lived with her during the last six years of my school life. I had only to go downstairs to school. I really thought I was happy and that surely I could learn at home better than in a public school. I fully realize now how sadly mistaken I was. When I came here to summer school in 1919 and spent six weeks it was my first trip away from home without one or both my parents. I was truly a helpless person that summer. Somehow I pulled through and am grateful for the experience.

And now about my mother. Somehow I am afraid to say a word about her as she is so close to my heart. Still you will not understand unless I do tell you about her. To begin with she allowed me to grow up in a tomboyish fashion—thinking only of fun and what I would do next. Not one thing did she tell me about the sex aspects of life. All of us were young together and kept so close that I asked few questions, and when I asked I was usually put off in some way. Being in a private school under the watchful care of an aunt and so closely kept at home, I did not worry much. Finally I began to take notice and hear from older girls the very things I had asked about. Of course they gave the information in the crudest way possible. They told me that my own mother had the babies and how and why. I got the idea that they came not because she wanted them but because it was the will of my father that she have the children. They—my parents—were so good to us, though, that this thought I was able somehow to keep out of my mind, or else I was too young at the time for it to bother me. However, it came back to me later. I read everything I could find on the subject of marriage and childbirth. Being so ignorant as to terms and now not daring to let my mother know I cared to know about the subject, as she had evaded so many of my questions—I became more and more confused and unhappy.

When I was about sixteen I began to be very friendly with my boy schoolmates. They came to my home to visit me. We would sometimes ride our wheels about the city. I liked these boys and wanted nothing better than to be with them.

Between the time I was seventeen and twenty-three I began being very



friendly with a woman of my mother's age. She would talk to me and tell me the things I was so anxious to know—I thought she did but find she didn't—and I was unafraid to ask her questions. My father was opposed to the friendship but my mother thought it all right, and so the friendship continued. At this time I had a man friend whom I liked very much. He wanted me to marry him, but I could not make up my mind as to how I actually felt toward him. This woman told me that I was very wise not to marry him as there was nothing in marriage but sex. In other words she made me think that to marry I would simply be committing fornication. I felt besmirched at the thought. Having a child would have been to commit the unpardonable. No one knows what I suffered from this confusion up until this summer.

Just at this time my mother told me she was expecting a baby. She had not had a child in sixteen years. She told me that she didn't expect to live and wanted me to raise the baby if it lived. They both lived! The child is now a young lady and happy with her first lover.

My second man friend was a splendid fellow and I know now did love me. No doubt we would have been happy. I could not say yes to him with my thoughts so terribly confused, so he passed out of my life. He is now in Florida and is not married.

I am now nearly forty years old and am somewhat afraid to face the future. My home is still unbroken, but for how long? I crave a home and family of my own—I realize this has been my desire a long time—but getting them calls for more thought.

One of the purposes of these experimental acquaintances is the testing they provide of the depth of interest and resources for a continuing relationship of the two individuals who have become fond of each other. To get the values that courtship furnishes along these lines there must be sufficient time and a willingness to accept the facts that come out of the association. Under no circumstances, even when made a trial marriage, can courtship so anticipate the conditions of marriage as completely to test the sympathies and common tastes of the man and woman, and if this were possible the later union would be deprived of its meaning as a new adventure in fellowship. There is, however, a decided difference between complete demonstration of compatibility and the surrendering to passion without any opportunity or willingness to test the character of their attraction. The following case is representative of those in which marriage unhappiness is clearly due to premature commitment.

*Case 3*

The husband and wife have been married thirteen years. He is a contractor making a good salary, and the wife is now the mother of three children, ages 12, 10 and 4. A, the husband, met B, the wife, one night at a dance in a town where he was visiting, and in one week they were married, having gone outside the state for the ceremony. They married without their parents' consent or knowledge. He was 22 and she 20. Their troubles began almost immediately after marriage. It was soon apparent that they had practically nothing in common and that they were too different in taste to arrive at a compromise without one of them greatly changing. In spite of the fact that they have not separated, they have in their period of marriage developed no domestic sympathy and are never seen together outside the home. The children are badly trained in part because of the great difference between the husband and wife in their ideas as to what treatment the children should receive. The mother is constantly complaining of the behavior of the two older children who are always away from home except for the necessary meals and a place to sleep. The husband spends his time with male companions or at work, cares little what his children do, if only they do not make themselves notorious or in some way injure his business reputation. The school authorities have found the two older children difficult. They are irresponsible and temperamental rather than bad, but are always in minor troubles. The mother scolds them constantly but makes no impression. She is ageing fast and growing more and more bitter with life. The husband does not treat her unkindly but rather ignores her and neglects his family responsibilities. Each blames the other for the unhappy marriage but neither is willing to consider divorce. The man apparently fears the danger of social disapproval and the wife the loss of economic support. Both father and mother are building in the children the idea that marriage never leads to happiness, but he is cynical whereas his wife feels bitterness.

During the testing period of courtship it is well to remember that no person can be well understood aside from his family background, and, if possible, before mutual interest develops very far both the man and the woman should visit each other's relatives. This not only helps them to understand the influences that have played upon the individual who has become attractive; it also reveals what may reasonably be expected from the family with whom marriage would bring connection. Far too often there is on both sides a reluctance to visit the other's relatives until after the announcement of the engagement, when this can no longer be avoided. Occasionally such

visitation makes it evident to one or even both of the parties thinking of marriage that there are insuperable barriers, and the sooner the engagement is severed the easier it is to make the necessary break. The program of ignoring relatives is easier to pursue before marriage than after, and only in rare cases can one safely ignore the relatives of the other.

**The man versus the woman.** It is easy to overstate the differences between the man's and the woman's rôle in courtship. Unquestionably recent social changes have tended to decrease this difference, but even if generalization is difficult, it is necessary to notice that still in most cases there are masculine and feminine conventions that influence the practices of courtship.

The most striking difference comes from the confidence of nearly all men that they will marry when they want to, and who therefore take it for granted that the decision is in their own hands. In contrast with this, in any group of young women will be found many who are wondering whether they will have an offer of marriage, or at least any invitation that they can seriously consider. It would be exaggeration to say that in one case we have absolute confidence and in the other a prevailing doubt, but such a statement would correctly interpret the marriage attitude of the majority of the group. This difference between the two expresses itself throughout the courtship experiences of most American youth. It leads to a heightening of the sense of competition among the women and the assumption of leadership in courtship activities among the men. It requires of the woman greater indirection in the expression of emotion, for when she does take the lead she must be more subtle than her partner who in most cases, even in these modern days, must be left with the feeling that he is taking the initiative.

It is this rather than anything inherently different in the instincts of the two sexes that makes courtship so often a game, even at times a contest, in which one seems to be the pursuer and the other the sought. The conventions are rooted in the circumstances of the former period when woman because of her economic dependence had to cater to masculine dominance. At present the more nearly we can approach to an equality of the sexes during courtship, the stronger will be the support that will come from the experience for equality after marriage. As it is, the fineness and the emotional sincerity which contribute measurably to successful modern marriage prove in

instances not a few a handicap rather than an advantage in the process of courtship merely because man has been taught by convention to resent straightforwardness on the part of the girl in whom he has become interested. Although the old code still remains standard, there is a considerable departure from it, especially in the cities, by those who from the beginning make their courtship more like a partnership than like the conventional contest.

It is still conventional teaching that the woman must hide the seriousness of her interest and keep the man in doubt until he is brought to an avowal of his love. It is considered risky for her to reveal her growing interest. During the first stages of courtship she is even urged skillfully to give the man a sense of competition and if necessary to bring forth a rival, that he may be as long as possible kept in doubt of the outcome of his suit. This is unfortunate because it drags in an element of deceit, an obstacle to frank understanding that may even become after marriage an emotional grievance. The more honest and understanding courtship can become, the greater its value as an experimental testing period before final commitment.

There are, as Popenoe says,<sup>4</sup> four mistakes made by men who take for granted their masculine prerogative and who are misled as to the proper technique to follow. One has come to be known as the "tactics of the cave man." The male who follows this attempts to force himself upon the woman he wants to marry and by impetuosity and strength of will to lead her into captivity. The second method assumes that woman must be led by suffering into love, that she responds favorably to cruel treatment, that painful experiences stir her love sooner than tenderness. The third mistake is to attempt to impress the girl by achievement or by boasting. This may attract attention but in itself it seldom wins the love of the girl and never provides a safe start for wholesome courtship. The last mistake is to play the rôle of the Don Juan who is supposed to have made many conquests and to have left in his wake a multitude of bleeding hearts. Here again it is seldom that the woman is seriously impressed and even more rarely that she is brought into the sympathetic response which is required in a satisfactory mating. Each of these blunders comes from regarding courtship as a masculine prerogative, a means of capturing the female through her inherent weakness rather than an

<sup>4</sup> P. Popenoe, *Modern Marriage*, pp. 104-106.



experimental fellowship for the purpose of discovering genuine love. The man who follows any one of these four courses is out of accord with the demands of a modern equality in marriage.

**The rôle of the woman.** Human evolution by its increase of material resources and security, leisure and sensitivity has correspondingly widened the self-consciousness of individuality. This progress has been most rapid during the nineteenth century and the twentieth, as a consequence of the advance of science, and as it has released a greater number of people from an automatic, socially determined adaptation to life and has brought them the sense of self-direction, there has been a heightening of the feeling of personality and a multiplying of the demands made on life.

In the slow growth of self-conscious needs from primitive life forward woman has shared unequally with man, because his economic advantages have favored his sense of individuality as compared with hers. During the last two decades, largely as a result of her relative economic independence, woman has been catching up and her demands both in and out of matrimony have correspondingly increased.

This situation is reflected in present American courtship which appears to be passing through a transition from woman's dependency to her equality with man. Naturally she is more conscious of the change than is man. This creates practical difficulties for many a woman during the courtship experience. If she follows the rôle of former tradition she antagonizes some of her own inclinations and gives the man a wrong interpretation of her attitude, which may build up in him an idea of a marriage program to which later she finds it difficult to subscribe. On the other hand, if she antagonizes too greatly the traditions which are more acceptable to her lover she may throw away her chance of mating.

It has been assumed in the past, and still is assumed by some writers, that the courtship rôle is fixed by instinct and operates quite differently upon the male and female. Competition between male animals at mating season is suggestive of this, and it is taken for granted that the human experience is a continuation of a male instinct to pursue and a female instinct to be pursued.

It is difficult to see how an original instinct can be preserved in such complicated behavior when it is so apparent to psychologists that human instincts are extremely meager and are evident in un-

adulterated form only in early childhood. It would be extremely strange if social convention left untouched the mating instinct when in every other activity we detect the influence of the socially conditioning processes that replace the instincts of the animal by the behavior patterns of modern men and women.

It is indeed true that the average man in courtship likes to feel that he is the pursuer and likewise that most women accept the rôle of being sought, but this distinction between the rôles of each has already been somewhat diminished and there are social influences that issue out of the freer life of women that continue to operate against it.

From the colonial period up to the latter part of the nineteenth century conventional courtship gave to many women a passage out of the status of dependency into a temporary elevation of individuality which man, driven by his love fancies, delighted to recognize. It was for most of these women, however, a brief tasting of the sense of individuality, and with marriage it had to be laid aside and compensation found in the maternal attitude expressed toward husband or children or both, or in the sense of obligation as housekeeper.

In cases not a few later experience led to a feeling of frustration rather than to fulfillment of personality and the courtship was looked back upon with bitterness or regret according to the temperament of the individual.

In these days the man who during courtship offers to the woman the homage and the indulgence once recognized as a temporary convention of courtship finds after marriage that his attitudes and behavior have been interpreted as the program of a life fellowship. Courtship privileges are not easily accepted as a mere episode by the modern American woman, for they are too much in accord with her expectation to be easily surrendered. The recoil against marriage that we find among some of our most sophisticated women who prefer an alliance based upon mutual consent rather than a legal marriage contract is based upon the fear that with marriage a sense of possession will be shown by the man and that this will be followed by a lessening of privileges that can only be maintained so long as the courtship situation prevails. The extreme reaction of these women at least brings to the surface a chronic cause of maladjustment in present-day American marriage.

**Advantage of concentration on mating.** There is a rather common belief, which has been cogently expressed by Freeman,<sup>5</sup> that the average man marries his inferior because during the period which normally belongs to her for courtship the woman of equal intellectual and moral capacity is interested in pursuits similar to his own and therefore neglectful of her interest in mating. The other type of girl not only gives herself wholly to the business of finding a mate but because of her lack of other interests appears sexually precocious, if indeed she is not so from the start. She more willingly than the first girl accepts the rôle given her by conventional courtship, and her new contacts with men fully awaken her mating impulses. The intellectual type of girl meets the man more largely as his equal, and often as his competitor, and either remains unconscious of her sex needs or conceals them by shyness, or in some cases inhibits them because of her greater discrimination in the choice of a potential mate.

That this is a true statement of what happens in countless cases no one familiar with marriage experience would be likely to deny. On the other hand, there is also evidence that men of distinction, men of unusual equipment, tend to choose life partners with greater than ordinary ability. Freeman is right in calling attention to the danger of the man of ambition precociously committing himself to a marriage with a woman who is not attempting to keep pace with his progress. Every college campus illustrates year by year the awakening of some young man or woman to the mistake of a promise of marriage that was made back in the home community before the maturing effect of higher education had led to an intellectual separation. Cruel as it often seems to break an engagement of this sort, in the long run it proves the only just thing for both individuals.

**Love experience.** The fact that courtship is a period of experimentation preparatory to the choice of a life mate emphasizes the need of considerable acquaintance on the part both of the man and of the woman, and the danger of a narrow range from which to choose. G. V. Hamilton's investigation shows how extensive the acquaintance was among those he studied.<sup>6</sup> The 100 men had 681 love affairs. Two of the women who were frankly homosexual and one other who was apparently homosexual had never been in love with any man. The remaining 97 women had had 677 love affairs. In the

<sup>5</sup> R. Austin Freeman, *Social Decay and Regeneration*, p. 264.

<sup>6</sup> *Research in Marriage*, pp. 210-211.

attempt to correlate the number of love affairs with the degree of satisfaction in marriage, Hamilton gathered an immense amount of detail concerning these various love affairs which deserves careful study. He also obtained information as to when love first was felt and how the experience, when it did not develop into marriage, was terminated.

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## CHAPTER VII

### PROBLEMS OF COURTSHIP

**Hazards of courtship.** Courtship has, as one would expect from its highly emotional character, problems, even hazards. Both have received much attention from writers who have sought to give counsel to youth. Although this recognition of the dangers of courtship is justifiable, it is important not to forget that the experience itself is both normal and advantageous in the career of the individual. Its hazards are great only because of its significance and because of its relation to later maturity.

Every period of development has risk for the individual passing through it, and adolescence, the time when courtship usually starts, appears in its influence on character second only to the period of childhood. Just as parents by over-protecting their children antagonize the normal growth of personality of their offspring, so also do they attempt the same unwise policy when their children arrive at the period of courtship. Their repressive attitude suggests the idea that the experience is inherently abnormal and that the parent is justified in attempting to prevent the child from entering upon it. In spite of this, strange as it may seem, some of these parents look forward to the eventual marriage of their child while at the same time blocking, as far as they have power, the child's entrance upon courtship.

**The fictitious atmosphere of courtship.** Daydreaming is not confined to any period of life, but it has long been recognized that it flourishes strongly during adolescence. Both boys and girls are addicted to it but the latter appear to do the more air-castle building. In spite of the grave risks connected with daydreaming at any period of time, it undoubtedly has in the majority of cases during adolescence a useful function in influencing later standards and expectations and often activities. Its chief danger is the opportunity it offers for retreat from the realities of life, always tempting to those who find actual adjustment difficult.

Adolescent daydreaming is not exclusively an expression of sex in-

terest, but an idealization of the interests connected with mating is the most usual and the most emotional of the various forms of daydreaming. With the awakening of heterosexual interests, fancy, as it has been continued from childhood, gets a fresh start and is turned in a new direction. The practice of daydreaming frequently precedes any serious practice of courtship and at times becomes a substitute for the experience. Once courtship starts, however, an outlet is provided for this habit of daydreaming so characteristic of adolescence. Under such circumstances courtship cannot escape an element of the fictitious; indeed, in modern life this has become a pronounced characteristic of courtship and provides the chief feature of what we call romantic love.

Thus an element of play-acting intrudes in the relationship which functions as a preliminary experimentation in fellowship. This acting a part may be conscious or unconscious, or, as is generally true, now conscious and now unconscious. Even when the rôle played contains a degree of fiction it is usually a response to convention and social idealization rather than a deliberate effort to deceive. This fact does not lessen the risk of the individual captivated by love being misled by his own fancies and by the pretenses of his comrade. To state the matter differently, it is difficult for one in love to respond to the emotional stimulation with daydreaming and idealization and at the same time to have the clarity of vision to see the facts that justify or challenge the wisdom of his attachment. Unless the relationship continues for a time sufficient to reveal in some measure the true personality, there is no hope of the association rising higher than mere passion, and however intense the romantic feeling may be during the courtship, it gives in itself no security for a happy mating.

**Courtship magnifies personality.** The difficulty of interpreting character during courtship is made greater by the fact that usually the experience not only leads to fancy on the part of both individuals but also stimulates each in such a way as to magnify the sense of personality and its expression so that attractive qualities appear in bold relief. This in itself seems to both the man and woman evidence of the trustworthiness of the experience. Each realizes what the love has done for him or her and each in turn sees the other in the most favorable light. In spite of this heightening of personality the individual in love may be deceived as to the wholesomeness of the relationship, for the strength that appears may issue from the

self and the other person may be only the stimulant that brought it to expression.

**Quarrels.** As is rather generally known, quarrels are apt to start on slight provocation during courtship. The explanation of this is the tension and the uncertainty as to the relationship generally felt, the demands that are mutually made, and particularly the sensitiveness that so often accompanies the experience. Although it is an exaggeration to say that "true love never runs smoothly," the proverb emphasizes the ease with which anger, jealousy and resentment start.

Much of the trouble comes from physical stimulation which causes unsatisfied sex hunger. In spite of the fact that these quarrels lead to temporary or permanent separation of lovers who entered upon a promising courtship, they are not altogether a liability since they have an explorative function and are often followed by a better understanding and an increase of mutual trust. The highest types of courtship, such as that of the Brownings, for example, escape even minor estrangement. Inferiority feeling and the state of doubt, still regarded by many as an indispensable part of the technique of courtship, encourage quarrels and jealousies. The greater frankness of modern youth as compared with the customs of their parents lessens the risk of contentions, but it is a rare fellowship that altogether escapes them.

**The cost of courtship.** The economic aspects of courtship have received far less attention than they deserve. The increased urbanization of American life and the marked trend toward commercial recreation are influencing the cost of courtship. Young people generally find that their being together is made easier if they share some sort of entertainment, and for the most part this means expenditure of money. It is still conventional for the man to foot the bills although there is a marked trend, represented by a minority, toward sharing equally the expenses. The economic burden of courtship rests nearly as heavily upon the girl as the boy, even when the prevailing convention is followed, because of her need of spending money for clothes to enhance her attractiveness.

The demands made of the boy by the modern college girl are not always selfish or thoughtless, since often when she accepts a date which carries no expense she suspects that she is cheapened in the thought of the man or is being sacrificed that he may have sufficient funds for entertaining some other girl. In self-defense, therefore, she

frequently resents inexpensive entertaining, fearing that if she allows this policy to prevail she will be outrivalled by some one else.

It is, of course, impossible to standardize the cost of courtship, for expenses vary not only in different classes of society and somewhat according to sections, but even more because of individual differences in resources and in habits. From budgets gathered in various colleges and universities a fair estimation seems to be that it costs the boy on ordinary occasions from one to two dollars and that attendance at a dance ranges from \$5.00 to \$25.00, while very formal dances carry the figure from \$25.00 upward, according to the individual purse and local standards. The following are representative budgets.

**Cost of courtship at Bucknell University.** Students of Bucknell University differ in their opinion as to whether courtship is expensive, some of them believing that the expense is more or less under the control of the student concerned. Courtship cost for the girls at Bucknell fluctuates from one extreme to the other, the lowest cited, where there was any cost, being 10 cents covering a period of four dates. This dime was spent for earbobs. The highest figure given for a single date was \$109.50. Usually when the figure extends to this height it has included a brand new outfit for a formal dance or a weekend houseparty.

Following are the expenditures of several girls who paid rather highly for one dance, but it must be remembered that the purchases may be utilized for other formal functions thereby lowering the cost of the particular event for which they were bought.

(A)

*Formal Dance Expenses*

Formal dress .....	\$29.00
Slippers .....	5.00
Stockings .....	1.00
Bunny coat .....	25.00
Handkerchief .....	.50
Evening bag .....	2.95
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Total .....	\$63.45

On the following two dates, one of which was an informal dance, A had no expense whatever.



(B)

*Formal Dance Expenses*

Evening dress .....	\$59.50
Finger wave .....	.50
Evening shoes .....	6.00
Stockings .....	2.50
Manicure .....	.50
Total .....	<u>\$69.00</u>

B incurred no expense for two following dates, one to the movies and one to an informal dance.

(C)

*Formal Dance Expenses*

Dress .....	\$25.00
Shoes .....	7.50
Underwear .....	8.00
Earrings .....	12.00
Evening bag .....	7.50
Stockings .....	1.95
Bath powder .....	1.00
Finger wave .....	.75
Manicure .....	.75
Eyebrow arch .....	.50
Gloves .....	8.50
Total .....	<u>\$73.45</u>

In preparation for a Tea Dance and another formal dance, C spent \$41.95 and \$36.20 respectively.

(C)

*Cost of One Big and Most Important Dance of the Season*

Shampoo .....	\$ 1.00	
Wave .....	.75	
Manicure .....	1.00	
Evening dress .....	39.75	
Shoes .....	18.00	
Gloves .....	7.00	
Jewelry .....	7.00	
Car fare .....	25.00	(round trip to houseparty)
Pocket money .....	10.00	
Total .....	<u>\$109.50</u>	

× C tells us that this dress cannot be counted entirely for one night as it can be used several times in different places, where the crowd is not the same as the first. Over a period of three ordinary dates her expenses amounted to 50 cents for a shampoo.

(D)

*Expenses in Preparation for a Large Dance*

Dress .....	\$40.00
Shoes .....	7.50
Stockings .....	1.35
Hairdressing .....	1.50
Nail polish .....	.50
Handkerchief .....	1.00
Total .....	<u>\$51.85</u>

A society dance and a college dance cost D \$1.50 and \$2.00 respectively.

A decided drop in the cost of dancing is shown by the expenditures of the following.

(E)

*Formal Dance*

Dress .....	\$19.75
Shoes .....	5.00
Finger wave .....	.75
Total .....	<u>\$25.50</u>

The following date cost her \$18.25; the second, \$3.90, and the third, nothing.

(F)

*Big Dance Date*

Dress .....	\$12.75
Hose .....	1.35
Handkerchief .....	.50
Finger wave .....	.50
Perfume .....	1.00
Total .....	<u>\$16.10</u>

(G)

*Important Dance*

Evening gloves .....	\$ 3.95
Hosiery .....	2.00
Earrings .....	1.00

Nail polish .....	.89
Hair remover .....	.75
Shampoo, etc. ....	.90
Undergarment .....	3.75
Total .....	<u>\$13.24</u>

(H)

*A Big Dance*

Evening dress .....	\$10.00
Handkerchief .....	.50
Finger wave .....	.50
Stockings .....	1.50
Misl. ....	1.50
Total .....	<u>\$14.00</u>

(I)

*Preparation for a Dance*

Dress .....	\$10.00
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(J)

Fraternity dance .....	\$4.75
All college dance .....	3.50
Total .....	<u>\$8.25</u>

Seven girls reported absolutely no expense over a period of from three to five ordinary dates. Eight reported no cost for one date, and one girl reported no expense for a dance.

**What the men pay at Bucknell.** Whether or not the girl should pay her own way is a controversial topic among Bucknell men, just as it is in other colleges and universities and in the business world as well. One man who is in sympathy with the expenditures the girl must make expresses his opinion as follows: "Although some fellows admire the practice of a girl paying half the bill, I can't even consider it at the present time. If I have enough money then I get a date, and if I haven't enough funds, then I do something that doesn't cost anything. In my opinion girls spend enough money preparing for their dates, because they are always buying dresses, hats, and cosmetics." A diverse opinion reads as follows: "I think that the girls of the country are asking a little bit too much in the way they demand entertainment and amusement at the expense of the young man. If a fellow these days doesn't have a car and plenty of time to spend on the girl, he doesn't stand a fair chance. About the only thing I hear

everywhere among the young men is, 'I'm broke, boys.' In explanation they say they have spent all their money in providing entertainment for 'the girl.' "

It is interesting that the Bucknell girls who made known their opinion on this subject were without exception in favor of the "Dutch" or coöperative system.

It would seem that the expenditures of the man, like those of the girl, vary according to the type of date; that is, the place, the time, and the girl chosen. Exemplary of the higher expenditures made by the man for dance, football, and weekend dates are the following:

## (A)

Carfare and return .....	\$40.00
Candy .....	2.00
Auto expense .....	10.00
Dance Friday night .....	2.00
Dinner after dance .....	3.00
Dance Saturday night .....	6.00
<hr/>	
Total .....	\$63.00

This does not include incidentals such as cigarettes, sandwiches, telephone, books, etc.

## (B)

*Average Weekend Expense*

<i>Friday</i>		<i>Saturday</i>		<i>Sunday</i>	
Gas .....	\$ 3.00	Food .....	\$ 5.00	Gas and oil ..	\$3.05
Food .....	2.50	Football ....	5.00	Food .....	2.00
Theater .....	6.60	Liquor .....	4.00	Miscl. ....	1.50
Hotel .....	4.50	Theater ....	6.60	<hr/>	
Tips, etc. ...	.70	Hotel .....	4.50	Total .....	\$6.55
Liquor .....	4.50	Miscl. ....	1.50		
<hr/>		<hr/>			
Total ....	\$21.80	Total ....	\$26.60		

Grand total .....\$54.95

## (C)

*Typical Weekend Expense Out-of-town*

Hair cut and shave .....	\$ .75
Shine .....	.10
Meals .....	8.00
Lodging .....	5.00



Carfare .....	10.00 to	15.00
Drinks .....		5.00
Theater tickets .....		8.00
Flowers, candy, etc. ....		2.00
Cigarettes .....		1.00
Football tickets .....		6.00
<hr/>		
Total .....	\$45.85 to	\$50.85

(D)

*Cost of Weekend Houseparty*

Subscription fee .....	\$10.00
Train fare (girl) .....	4.75
Room (for girl) .....	2.00
Meals (for girl) .....	3.50
Tuxedo pressed .....	.50
Tuxedo shirt cleaned .....	.20
Telegrams (to girl) .....	1.25
Extra entertainment .....	2.00
Corsage (for girl) .....	2.00
<hr/>	
Total .....	\$26.20

Some less expensive football and dance dates follow:

(E)

*Formal Dance, N. Y. C.*

Tickets .....	\$ 5.00
Cab .....	3.00
Refreshments .....	3.00
Miscl. ....	1.00
<hr/>	
Total .....	\$12.00

*An Evening's Entertainment at Bucknell*

Moving picture .....	\$ .70
Refreshments .....	.50
<hr/>	
Total .....	\$1.20

(F)

*Bucknell-Villanova Football Game—Afternoon*

Taxi fare to game plus tips .....	\$ .75
Two tickets .....	6.00
Program .....	.25
Coffee during game .....	.20
<hr/>	
Total .....	\$7.20

*Night*

Shoe shine .....	\$ .25
Dinner .....	1.50
Dance .....	1.75
Checks for girl .....	<u>.20</u>
Total .....	\$3.70
Grand total .....	\$10.90

F tells us that it was necessary for him to save several weeks for this date, but that after having such a wonderful time he was willing to remain around the college for the next three or four following weekends and study.

The lowest costing single "average" date, that is a date not including dancing, games, etc., reported by a man is 60 cents, while the highest runs up to \$9.15. Judging from the following reports an enjoyable date may be had for any amount between these two.

(1)

<i>Date No. 1</i>	<i>Date No. 2</i>	<i>Date No. 3</i>
Car rent .... \$6.30	No expense	Street car fare \$ .20
Tickets for		Show tickets . <u>1.50</u>
show ..... 1.00		Total ..... \$1.70
Ice cream ... <u>.20</u>		
Total ..... \$7.50		

(2)

Refreshments . \$2.50	Gas ..... \$ .70	No expense
Gas and oil .. .35		
Refreshments . <u>.50</u>		
Total ..... \$3.35		

All above dates of No. 2 were with the same girl. First was a "double" date hence the odd price for gasoline, 50-50.

(3)

Shoe shine ... \$ .15
Gasoline ..... <u>.42</u>
Show ..... 1.30
Eats ..... <u>1.25</u>
Total ..... \$3.12

(4)

<i>Date No. 1</i>	<i>Date No. 2</i>	<i>Date No. 3</i>
Movies ..... \$ .70	Dance ..... \$1.50	Gasoline ..... \$ .75
Sodas ..... .30	Eats ..... .50	Refreshments . 1.50
Total ..... \$1.00	Total ..... \$2.00	Total ..... \$2.25

(5)

Show tickets . \$ .70	Transportation \$ .50	(occasion, a ride)
Carfare ..... .20	Drinks ..... .10	
Drinks ..... .10	Total ..... \$ .60	
Total ..... \$1.00		

**Courtship cost of Vassar girls.** Out of a group of seventy-eight girls reporting on the expense incurred in preparing for formal and informal dances, twenty reported that they had had no expense when they had dates for these affairs. Twenty-one had only car or train fare, and this varied from 25 cents to \$25.00. In a number of cases a hotel bill was added to the cost of transportation. The highest amount reported as the cost of a formal dance reached the sum of \$560.00. It is itemized below.

Train fare (200 miles) .....	\$ 12.00
Taxis and tips .....	2.00
Meal on train .....	1.75
Shampoo, wave, manicure .....	5.00
Evening dress (dress will be worn one or more times in two years) .....	195.00
Evening wrap (own fur supplied) will be worn 2-3 years .....	275.00
Slippers—about two years .....	37.50
Stockings—about two years .....	4.50
Gloves—1 season .....	6.50
Bag—2 years .....	20.00
Telegrams and telephone .....	.75
Total .....	\$560.00

The following appear to be representative of average expenditures for dances.

(A)

*Formal Dance*

Hair .....	\$ 2.25	
Dress .....	55.00	(will be worn three
Total .....	\$57.25	times)

(B)

*Formal Dance at College*

Dues .....	\$12.00
Dinner .....	3.00
Man's room .....	6.00
Meals .....	5.00
<hr/>	
Total .....	\$26.00

(C)

*Cost of Last Formal Dance*

Dues .....	\$12.00	(cost of new dress not included. Wore my sister's)
Room at Alumnae House .....	2.75	
Slippers .....	9.00	
Stockings .....	1.35	
Girdle .....	3.95	
Evening miscl. ....	1.00	
Shampoo and finger wave .....	2.50	
<hr/>		
Total .....	\$32.55	

(D)

*Formal Dance*

Manicure .....	\$1.25
Miscl. ....	1.25
<hr/>	
Total .....	\$2.50 (already had clothes)

(E)

*Formal Dance*

Shampoo and wave .....	\$1.00
Manicure .....	.75
<hr/>	
Total .....	\$1.75

What men at the University of North Carolina pay for courtship. It is thought by some of the men at the University of North Carolina that all girls are "gold diggers" and not at all in sympathy with the boy's financial status, while others seem to think that many girls are more careful about spending the man's money than is the man himself. One man says, "The 'regular' girl does not want a show or dinner or dance every night." Another says, "The average southern girl believes that her boy friend should spend money as though he had a continuous income. She thinks he ought to take her



to the show, to some expensive place to eat, and bring her flowers or candy every time he comes. I say this is the case with a majority."

A different statement is this: "In my experience with girls, I have found that those who come from a family which can provide them with a reasonable amount of money for their own enjoyment, are not endeavoring to have the man spend much money."

J says, "The girls I have gone out with were all very reasonable in expectations."

Following are some representative reports on the cost of ordinary dates:

(A)

<i>During Christmas Holidays</i>		<i>During Summer Months—Per Week</i>	
Gasoline .....	\$2.00	Gasoline .....	\$1.00
Dry-cleaning .....	1.00	Sodas .....	.50
<hr/>		<hr/>	
Total .....	\$3.00	Total .....	\$1.50

(B)

Regularly about two shows per week .....	\$ 1.60
Gasoline per week, about .....	2.00
Occasional trip (once every two months) .....	10.00 to 25.00
Occasional play or athletic event .....	5.00 to 6.00
Drug store treats, per week .....	.50
<hr/>	
Total .....	\$19.10 +

(C)

The cost of courtship for me is not very great. There is usually the expense of refreshments at a drug store, gasoline, dances, a few Christmas presents, movie tickets, etc. I am from a city of 20,000 persons and naturally have no night clubs and theater ticket expenses.

*Average Evening*

Refreshments .....	\$ .50
Gasoline .....	.50
Movie .....	1.00
Dance .....	2.00 to 4.00
<hr/>	
Total .....	\$4.00 +

Occasional "big weekends" at college run from \$10.00 to \$25.00.

(D)

I find that in towns the size of Raleigh in North Carolina the cost of an evening out with a girl is about \$1.50. On special occasions occurring three or four times a year, it runs up to \$5.00.

(E)

*Rural Community 20 Miles from Town*

Trip to beach each week:		Trip to town once a month:	
Bathing .....	\$ .70	Theater .....	\$ .80
Drinks .....	.20	Drinks .....	.20
Eats .....	.30	Eats .....	1.00
<hr/>		<hr/>	
Total .....	\$1.20	Total .....	\$2.00

(F)

## Average cost for "Regular Girl."

Gasoline .....	\$1.00
Eats, drinks .....	.50
Miscl. ....	.50
<hr/>	
Total .....	\$2.00

**University of Alabama, Girls.** Following are reports from three girls at the University of Alabama as to the cost of courtship.

(A)

*Cost of Last Date*

Shampoo, trim, and finger wave .....	\$3.00
New dress .....	8.95
<hr/>	
Total .....	\$11.95

(Dress worn very often on Sundays, going to movies, etc. Will continue to be worn.)

(B)

*Football Weekend (Staying at Home)*

Hair wash and wave .....	\$ 1.00
Gasoline (one way) .....	2.50
Train fare one way (Boston) .....	13.00
Meals on trip .....	1.25
Taxi .....	.50
Tips .....	1.00
<hr/>	
Total .....	\$19.25

(C)

*Last Date (at Home)*

Went to Cambridge for Yale-Harvard football game. Spent exactly \$25.00 on train fare, hotel, porters, and trolley fare. Estimated cost for clothing attributable only to this date, \$7.00. Spent nothing for meals except on train.

It is evident that the cost of courtship delays the thought of marriage among some men, especially those working their way through college. It is also clear that in some cases the expenses of courtship lead to postponement of marriage by men who do not dare to enter matrimony without saving and who at the same time cannot accumulate because of the cost of entertaining the girls in whom they are interested.

**Courtship intimacy.** At the present time the most important problem connected with courtship is concerned with the question of intimacy. Perhaps this has long been true, but if so, modern youth are more conscious of the problem and one gets the impression that they reveal in practice greater variation than in the days of the chaperon and more rigid conventions.

The first thing that has to be recognized in any discussion of this subject is the influence of social conditions. Comparison between different times, different classes, different races and national groups leads to a misinterpretation of the problem. To a large extent the meaning of courtship behavior is relative to its time, place and class as we shall later see. On account of the biological elements involved this cannot be altogether mere social convention. The folkways, however, have much to do with the significance of courtship conduct, and at the present the difference between the majority of parents and the majority of youth as to what is proper in courtship is so great as to constitute a serious problem for both and a point of contention that leads often to misunderstanding, conflict, and even alienation of affection.

Courtship response has ranged over codes of conduct as widely separated as that restricted to the glance of the eye of the veiled woman among the Mohammedans and the *bundling* that grew up in colonial America, especially in New England. Sex response becomes so delicately adjusted to the prevailing means of stimulation that the accidental touch of the hand or the quick lift of the eye may bring physical passion to a flame while under different social circumstances any

of these forms of expression would be utterly ignored. This element of relativity cannot be disregarded, for at present it is a source of danger in courtship and a cause of unnecessary panic among many parents.

During the last two decades there has been a lifting of much of the taboo that has gathered about sex, resulting in a more natural and frank association of young men and women. The change is evident in a multitude of ways and in contrast with the artificiality and concealment of the past is generally regarded as something wholesome from the point of view of friendships during youth and associations preparatory to marriage. So fundamental a change in the relationships of young people would necessarily influence conduct in courtship and there is every reason to suppose that this has been one of its largest results. With this change have gone social conditions that permit greater freedom, that in former times would have been outlawed, being altogether contrary to the proprieties then enforced by social opinion.

There have resulted in the United States, if one can safely generalize regarding behavior so much influenced by locality, class differences, and family tradition, freer relationships in courtship, and this has met with three different social attitudes. For some this is regarded as merely the opening of an era to be characterized by no restraint during youth. This program, advocated as a means of removing adolescent strain, has been accepted by some who are unconscious of its implications.<sup>1</sup> Others read into the behavior of youth the meaning this would have had in their own day and consider the code of our young people utterly bad. The third group, and this is where the author stands, considers the code of youth a transition code, which attempts to adapt itself to changed circumstances and demands of the individual greater judgment, more self-control, and more sincerity than ever previously was required of youth.

**Petting.** In such a discussion as this it would appear an evasion of one of the serious problems of courtship to ignore the subject of petting. Unfortunately, the term itself is one of the vaguest and carries different meaning to different individuals. As the word is used in conversation at present it has such a variation of meaning that a precise definition is impossible. Generally speaking, by petting is meant

<sup>1</sup> For the Author's position, see "Adolescent Strain and Social Pressure," *Social Forces*, Vol. VII, No. 3, pp. 343-350.



some form of love-making in the realm of what the psychologist would call secondary expression of sex. This includes kissing, holding of hands, and embracing. When thus described it is apparent that it is not such a new problem as some insist, since from the time of the coming of courtship as an expression of romantic love the same problem to some degree and in some form has existed. It would be wrong, however, to affirm that it is in no sense new, for this aspect of courtship, like all the others, has been influenced by changes in our thinking and in our ways of living.

**Dell's interpretation of petting.** The issues involved in the problem of petting have never been more clearly stated than by Floyd Dell, who has attempted to explain the origin of this craving for intimacy in courtship. Writing for *The Parents' Magazine* he says:

If some bio-psychological Svengali could hypnotize Phyllis and get her to put her profound instinctive and unconscious knowledge into words, it might impress doubting parents. Meanwhile, our psychologists and biologists have been securing this information for us. So let us suppose Phyllis, in a hypnotic trance, telling her mother why she pets. Her explanation—if our psychologists and biologists are right—would be something like this:

"Mother, you want me to get married some day. You want me to be in love with the man I marry. You want me to stay in love with him all the rest of my life. That takes a great deal of love. I'll have to be capable of loving a man very deeply before I can make a successful marriage. I couldn't do it now. I'm still half a child. Only a few years ago I was really a child. All I knew of love was the kind of love I felt for you and Father and my brothers and my girl friends. I knew there was something different, but it meant nothing to me. Then at puberty, I began to feel differently. Boys became more interesting to me. I was beginning to grow up into a woman.

"But, Mother, a girl doesn't become a woman in a day. It seems to take several years. There is a lot to go through. I'll tell you about it. Grown-up woman-love for a mate is two feelings put together. One is the kind of feeling I had about you and Father—you can call it the spiritual part of love, if you want to. I was just crazy about both of you, and I still think you are about the most wonderful people in the world. That's one part of the way I'll have to feel about the man I marry, if my marriage is to be happy and lasting. Then there's the other part—the new, mysterious attraction of body to body. I'll have to feel that tremendously for the man I marry. I'll have to feel both ways at once. That will be grown-up mate-love.

"But it takes time. And it doesn't happen in a vacuum. It's a succession of actual human experiences that make an adolescent girl grow up, a step at a time, into a woman. First of all, when I began to feel this new attraction to boys, I became shy of them. It was like exploring a new country—the least thing was fascinating and thrilling, and I wanted to go slowly. I was really a little afraid of this new country.

"I was excited and disturbed about boys, but at the same time I felt a little scornful of them. They seemed rather crude and awkward and silly. I know why that was, too. All my respect and tenderness, all of the spiritual part of love, if you want to call it that, was still tied up to you and Father. I began to detach it from you by degrees. I had a tremendous case on Mr. Smith, my history teacher. He was a kind of love-substitute for Father and a step away from my family. It was a very rarefied kind of love-affair, a very childish love-affair, and of course it was all on my side—but it had the faintest glimmerings of something in it that I didn't feel for Father. Then I began to have cases on movie actors. They were at a safe distance, you see, and my feelings could be less and less daughterly. Then I let myself fall in love (without their ever knowing it) with young men, who regarded me as a mere child. I was getting down toward my own age-class, and still playing safe. I've got down now to my brother Bill's room-mate at college. He's out of my age-group, but not so terribly far out. You see, I'm growing up. Bill's room-mate is a long way from Father!

"But all that is the spiritual side of love—worship and admiration. And there was the other side of love to be developed, too. It had to be developed at the same time, but it had to be with different persons. I couldn't let myself be physically attracted to the men I worshiped and admired—or I couldn't let myself know I was attracted, if I was—and I couldn't worship and admire the boys I petted with. You mustn't blame me for that; it's nature's fault, not mine. It takes years for the two kinds of love to grow together. That's what adolescence is for. So I worshiped my god-like heroes from afar, and petted with boys I felt very little tenderness for and certainly no overwhelming admiration."

Luckily for Phyllis, the United States was settled at first chiefly by North European stocks, English, Dutch, German and Scandinavian. Luckily, for they set our American customs for us, and now Phyllis can play with boys, get acquainted with them, pet as she pleases, and marry for love. I think Phyllis's mother ought to be glad, too. She really wouldn't like to have to coop up her daughter and then marry her off to some man she had never had any chance to learn to love. She prefers the Anglo-Saxon way of bringing up girls and boys. Well, then, she'll have to take a lot

of Anglo-Saxon petting-parties for her daughter along with the rest of it. For it's all of a piece.

We know, of course, that for a while there was the Victorian idea that young people could be given complete unchaperoned freedom, and yet be dissuaded from any physical contacts until they were properly engaged. But this required a replacing of bolts and bars, chaperons and duennas, by an inculcated fear of or disgust with sex, sometimes miscalled "purity." The psychiatrists who have been dealing with the frightful results of this kind of emotional maleducation tell us that it is far worse than the older bolts and bars, because it has made miserable neurotics out of many people and permanently unfitted them for finding happiness in love and marriage. Better have adolescent petters now than miserably neurotic failures in marriage later.<sup>2</sup>

**An analysis of the problem.** It is obvious that Dell in his interpretation is emphasizing the maturing of the heterosexual attitude and that he is discussing the educational import of the urges toward intimacy that arise in courtship. That these accompany the maturing of the human organism no one would question. Indeed, in savage society in connection with the initiation ceremony we find cases in which boys and girls are introduced to adult sex practices for the purpose of ending the adolescent period abruptly and prematurely forcing the boy or girl into the full responsibility of manhood or womanhood. It is also the belief of many sociologists that this sex precocity has no small part in bringing about mental quiescence and a stationary social culture.

However liberal the interpreters who stress the maturing function of courtship, there are very few who advocate the abandoning of all restraint and the inauguration of a program of license for modern youth similar to that found in some primitive societies. We are faced, therefore, even when we recognize the educational aspect of courtship intimacy, with the question, To what degree and in what form is restraint expedient?

The young man or woman facing this problem in the concrete with open-mindedness and sincerity will get help by continuing the analysis of the sex side of courtship further than Dell has in this article. In addition to the part this experience of petting plays in bringing greater maturity to heterosexual urges, there are also two contrasting results

<sup>2</sup> Floyd Dell, "Why They Pet," *The Parents' Magazine*, October, 1931. (Quoted by permission of the author and *The Parents' Magazine*.)

connected with it that need to be separated and understood. One is the fact that courtship to a considerable degree acts as a sublimation of physical sex desire. The biological hunger is transformed into complex expression that is essentially mental and social, and were this not true the idealization of courtship would be negligible and human mating would continue close to the pairing of animals. Even when intimacy proceeds to the secondary sex expression that Dell interprets, it is still substitutive in character, essentially a form of sublimation, but only so if the sex urges meet with restraint.

Were this all that analysis reveals, the problem would indeed be simple, but it is certain also that expression of sex attraction in courtship acts upon the organism in an exactly opposite way. It is as truly a stimulating as a sublimating experience. Whatever may be the reaction of the imagination, there is a basic body structure organized to respond to sex stimulation in whatever form it appears. And this body mechanism, once it is aroused, has no concern with inhibition or sublimating experiences but is set to proceed directly to a purely physical release of nervous energy. Thus appears the fundamental problem of restraint in courtship, which can be eliminated only by taking out of modern life all the refinement of love and poetry associated with courtship and retreating to the simpler and meager experiences of primitive people.

**Dangers of petting.** Our analysis discloses that petting is not a modern problem but that in some form it has existed to test the quality of courtship since the coming of such love association. Experience with this problem has led to the recognition of certain hazards that the intelligent person will recognize. One is the danger of precocious commitment. Under stimulation intimacy may go so far as to make it seem to one or both individuals that marriage is an obligation, even though as a result of this recognition of duty there may be loss of the desire to marry. This by no means occurs only when there has been such a degree of intimacy as to lead to pregnancy, or the fear of pregnancy. The point at which a feeling of obligation to marry emerges is variable, influenced by the prevailing culture and by the character of the individuals. Obligation is always a dangerous doorway to matrimony, and anything that makes it liable is detrimental to the social purpose of courtship.

The second consequence of courtship intimacy may be a fixation of sex hunger upon the level of what is known as its secondary expres-



sion. In cases not a few, as the specialist knows, individuals who seemed highly sexed in courtship have lost, because of their habit of secondary sex expression, their normal biological hunger and are thus forced to find in marriage an anti-climax.

#### *Case 4*

A, an exceedingly popular college student, unquestionably highly sexed, for several years before marriage maintained highly emotional relationships with various male friends, restricting the expression of sex to kissing and other secondary expressions. After several years of affairs she finally concentrated on one man, and married. Very soon it was apparent both to her and her husband that matrimony had for her no satisfaction and that she was still highly promiscuous in secondary sex relationships. She has never had children and now finds marriage endurable only as her social life brings her opportunities for sex stimulation of the sort that interested her before marriage. Her husband has been forced to accept this program or permit a divorce which for professional reasons he does not desire.

It is also found in some instances that by allowing sex intimacy to go to great lengths the value the woman had for the man or that the man had for the woman, and which had previously prophesied marriage, is lost and the association is aborted by having become so largely physical in character. The frequency with which this happens reveals the hazard that is inherent in the sex attraction of courtship.

#### *Case 5*

A is a graduate college student who confesses that he has been carrying on with a young woman of the city what he describes as practically a companionate marriage. He seeks an interview because, although he has promised to marry the girl, he is beginning to feel that this will be a mistake. It is evident that he has lost his interest and his respect for the girl and is trying to find from some outside source the means of escaping the responsibility which he feels for marrying the girl who has fully trusted him. The objection he makes to marriage and the faults he rehearses in the character of the girl are trivial and show only the direction in which his desire seeks to travel. Actually the two seem to be well fitted for each other, but it is clear that the marriage she takes for granted will never bring her happiness even if it be carried out. Of course, he now regrets his courtship program and apparently will find in guilt-feeling and self-criticism a relief for his conscience which protests against his selfish seeking of a way of escape from the carrying out of his own promises.



**Mutual responsibility.** It is dangerous in courtship for either the man or the woman to assume that upon the other depends the responsibility for the courtship program. It is a mutual obligation and does not belong exclusively to the man, as was thought in times past by those who assumed that he alone had sex desire, nor exclusively to the woman, as was thought by others because upon her fell chiefly the biological consequences of intercourse. It is easy for either the man or the woman to over-estimate the knowledge that the other has of the dangers of courtship intimacy and to assume that the needed precautions are being taken. It is still true, particularly among girls, that the amount of knowledge regarding sex, at least in any concrete and protective form, is when least suspected extraordinarily lacking. Some of the most tragic experiences in courtship that have been brought to me for counsel have resulted from either the man or woman assuming that the partner was fully conscious of the dangers of courtship intimacy when he or she was decidedly ignorant.

**Opportunity for courtship.** Strange as it will seem to men and women living in the favorable environment of rural and village communities, there is for some young people a considerable problem as to how to obtain an opportunity for courtship because of lack of privacy, but in the cities this is true. In their effort to help youth some churches and organizations like the Y.W.C.A. have attempted to provide a place for courtship.

One reason why the automobile has come to have so large a place in the courtship of modern youth is that without it many young men and women have little chance for the privacy which our modern culture requires in courtship. Young women living with their parents in congested quarters in the cities or residing in the buildings of organizations such as the Y.W.C.A., where there is a regulation against male visitors in private rooms, find need of seeking the opportunity for courtship which others in favorable circumstances have as a matter of course. Sometimes the opposition of parents also makes it difficult for the daughter to find a place for courting unless she goes outside her home for the association. This problem of providing a place of meeting for the young woman and man interested in each other is a real one and there is need of recognizing it and solving it in the city life of to-day.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### EARLY MARRIAGE, ITS ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

**The ideal age for marriage.** Since the days of Plato and Aristotle there has been discussion as to when it is best for men and women to marry. Any attempt to fix the ideal age for marriage may appear merely academic, since the question, When is it best to marry? as it arises in practical form is always specific and individual, answerable only in the light of all the facts concerning the two persons involved, but a discussion of the general subject proves helpful because it brings out the facts that any couple needs to consider when forced to make a decision regarding the advisability of postponing marriage.

There is at times, as one would suppose, hesitation because of two conflicting motives. One of these interests is the biological. If upon it alone depended the answer to the question, when to marry, we would need only to know how soon the body is ready to enter upon the relationship of marriage and the possibility of parenthood. Doubtless, even if the problem were confined to this biological question, the ideal age for marriage in a general sense would exist only statistically since in the concrete it would be necessary to recognize variations in the physical maturing of individuals.

It is felt by some students of the biological problem that even if all social considerations were put aside there would still be a basis for conflict between two separate biological motives for marrying. This would result from the fact that sex urge and the possibility of its satisfaction develop before the body is prepared, at least in the case of the female, for the assumption of parenthood. Thus the age for marrying, determined narrowly with thoughts of eliminating sex strain, would be earlier than if the matter were settled with emphasis upon reproduction.

In modern society the question cannot be treated as exclusively biological, even though this might be the ideal which society should seek, because marriage also has a social significance that cannot be safely ignored. The consequence of this is that in its practical form the

question, when one should marry, usually arises because of a collision between the biological and social values involved. One of the most frequent of the social reasons for delay is the effect marriage would have upon the intellectual maturity and achievement of the man and woman, particularly of the man, who may be tempted to shorten his educational or professional preparation for life in order to marry. Economic considerations also greatly influence the decision as to the proper time to marry, and these operate especially on the middle class by lifting the age period. The problem is further complicated by the tendency for an early marriage to over-emphasize physical attraction and to discount the traits that would have more consideration at a later time when their influence upon matrimonial happiness would be better appreciated.

**Early marriage and education.** It is evident that education is one of the chief influences tending to advance the age of marriage. After the body is biologically matured the period of preparation for later life is continued artificially along social lines by means of equipping the individual through education to meet more effectively the responsibilities and opportunities of modern culture. When a choice must be made between shortening necessary educational preparation and postponing the period of marriage, wise judgment accepts the latter. There are, however, programs that attempt to escape this dilemma. One which is not uncommon on the university campus is the going on of the educational preparation of the husband while the wife works to support the family. Although this policy undoubtedly often works out successfully, it carries, as is at once clear, grave risk. The following case illustrates this.

#### *Case 6*

A is a college graduate who gave up professional training that she might marry and immediately enter upon work that would support her and her husband, who was to continue professional study. This meant for her giving up all hope of training for her chosen life work and taking a routine but profitable employment. As later became clear her choice also included a considerable amount of housekeeping during the time when she was not at her daily work. In an interview in which she announced her thought of getting a divorce she admitted that she had become alienated from her husband by her reaction to the burden she carried, which she felt was unjust and not appreciated.



She had no specific fault to find with her marriage or with her husband's behavior, but unquestionably the program she had accepted had proven too difficult for her. She was chronically over-fatigued and so close to nervous exhaustion that she had to have treatment from a specialist, and she was continuously depressed. She admitted that sex desire had grown feeble and that the physical intimacy of marriage was more a burden than a satisfaction. She feared a nervous breakdown, according to medical authorities not without reason, and confessed to general irritability and lack of response to her husband's affection. Both recognized that they were drifting apart, and the wife felt that perhaps she should under the circumstances release her husband, who on his side had come to feel that he was incapable of making his wife happy.

Another solution is for both the husband and wife to work while one or both continue education. The family of B illustrates this.

#### *Case 7*

Both have part-time work, while each continues advanced study. They have been married two years and have coöperated in simple housekeeping in a small flat at a university in a western city where employment on a part-time basis is more feasible than would be true in most localities. They are exceedingly happy in spite of some economic struggle, but there cannot be any doubt that the woman is over-working and is already revealing consequences of this in the lowering of her previous health, because of which at present she is receiving medical attention which the doctor admits cannot help much so long as she continues her double undertaking. Fortunately, this courageous couple look forward to the husband's entering upon his profession after two years more of study, and the wife's giving up her present employment and concentrating upon her home responsibilities.

Another type of solution is parental subsidy of one or both of the young people who marry and continue education. This at present is unacceptable to most American parents even when they have the means to carry on the education of son or daughter without personal sacrifice. It is an unorthodox policy, since most parents feel that with marriage should come personal support even though it means the husband's or wife's sacrificing higher education. It is questionable whether this general attitude is reasonable. At least the concrete circumstances deserve consideration in those cases in which parents can as easily contribute funds for education after marriage as before.



There are instances in which early marriage, at least marriage before professional training, is highly desirable and the means of parents on one or both sides are ample to subsidize the new family.

Marriage under such circumstances brings concentration on work and lessens the temptation never absent from a prolonged engagement. Much depends upon the temperament and seriousness of the young husband and wife and the conditions under which they receive parental assistance. It is interesting to notice that the first and second program and usually the third takes for granted an effective technique of contraception which will prevent the premature coming of a child.

Investigation of the attitude of college students regarding the subsidized marriage, made at the University of North Carolina and at other institutions through the generous coöperation of instructors in courses on the family, leads to the conclusion that men are more favorable to this third solution than are women.

*University of North Carolina*

50 Students—all men: 80% for and 20% against subsidy

*Bucknell College*

26 Students—all girls: 77% for and 23% against subsidy

*Vassar College*

46 Students—all girls: 60% for and 40% against

*University of Alabama*

29 Students—all girls: 62% for and 38% against

The following are characteristic statements made by women and men in favor of and against parental subsidy of marriage for the purpose of aborting long engagements:

*Man against.*

One of the most perplexing problems of modern life is exemplified by the youth who, in the midst of his college career, suddenly finds himself in the throes of love. Shall he yield to his emotion and give up the idea of a collegiate education or shall he suppress within himself the natural craving and, like a good monk, consecrate himself on the altar of knowledge? For generations the prevailing point of view was that marriage meant automatically the end of all school attendance. This conviction existed and was nearly always borne out by actual facts.

Modern thought and liberal tendencies bring the question to a new consideration and suggest a solution as plausible as it is impractical. They

propose to do away with the self-sacrificing type of student who forgoes the joys of active life for the sake of education. They remove the barrier between love and education. Any one who is supported through college by his parents deserves this support whether single or married.

Unfortunately the obstacles to the practical working out of this idea are many. Even if we assume that a complete change of attitude take place, that parents do not withdraw the support of their child in college after he or she has married, the problem is far from solution. Will the parents of the college student support also the wife? Or will her parents be willing to support their daughter after she has married? But let us suppose that the parents in both cases are sufficiently wealthy to make no issue of that, is it wise for the married folks to live separated and see each other only at rare intervals and this, too, during the earliest years of marriage? The couple must be mutually agreed not to have any children, which is another way of saying that no cementing bond, no creation of a home must be permitted to take place during the early years of married life.

It is charged that the young man who marries will be more studious and alert in his work, will avoid the pitfall of promiscuous sex relationship. The truth is that education and marriage are incompatible as far as youth is concerned. Any advantages that may be derived from the marriage will be offset by problems that will necessarily arise in every marriage. These problems will make concentrated study impossible. After all the single status is better adapted for study.

There is one type of case where marriage while attending college is justifiable: it is the case of a college student who will graduate in a year or thereabouts and who expects a brilliant career afterwards. In this case it might be wise to put up with the inconvenience for the sake of future returns. But in every other case to risk a marriage before finishing the college years is to risk the education itself.

Personally, I can see no better solution to this problem than the *status quo* policy. It is certainly unfortunate that the responsibilities of a young man are so great and manifold, his social obligations so burdensome that he must break his life in two and fulfill one part of the obligations at a time. The present educational system, the conventional mode of preparation for life, makes it necessary to take away the young man or young woman from active participation in life. On the other hand, marriage, with all its comforts, lures many away from an adequate and seasonable preparation. The prospect is a gloomy one and like in so many other things we can only criticize the faults of the present-day society without being able to suggest any solution and hope that better social conditions will prevail in the future.

*Man in favor of subsidy.*

In order to get around this problem it has been suggested that the parents subsidize their children in marriage until they were financially sound. I am heartily in favor of this suggestion. I hardly see how two people living together would spend more than two living separately. If the couple were separated, the parents of each would be keeping them up anyway. Why not let them go ahead and marry and derive the benefits of an early marriage? Of course, it is understood that each set of in-laws will coöperate in providing the upkeep for the couple. It would be unfair to ask one set of parents to support the couple. Another presupposition would be that the subsidy should be only temporary, lasting until the young husband got on his feet. Then, too, children should not be born during this period of upkeep by the parents. If these last conditions be granted, it seems to me that this is the logical and most desirable solution of the problem.

*Woman against subsidy.*

I do not think it is wise to marry while in school and depend upon either parent to subsidize the family. I think we are asking enough of our parents to give us money while in college to meet our ordinary needs, without asking for extra money to support us after marriage. Of course, if the family insists on giving this extra money to the boy or girl, and will give them money after finishing school until the boy can support his family, I see no reason why they shouldn't marry. I think if they are inclined to study, they will study just as much after marrying as they did before and will do just as well in their school work.

*Woman in favor of subsidy.*

I am an advocate of early marriage, that is, I do not find the objections to it that many people do. Perhaps this is in self-defense, as my husband and I were only nineteen years old and sophomores in college at the time of our marriage. We had no intentions of continuing our educational careers after our marriage, but our parents had other plans for us, so that in two days after the wedding we were back in school with the determination to prove to our parents, especially my father, who held some doubt in his mind as to the advisability of our returning to the University, that we would improve our standing in scholarship. The first quarter after our marriage we both made the honor roll; before this time our grades had been very low, in fact, my husband was placed on probation one quarter during his freshman year.

I firmly believe that our marriage has been the determining factor in our ambition to finish school. We will receive our degrees this June, my husband's being in Electrical Engineering, while mine is in Home Eco-

nomics. He is planning on continuing another year to work on a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering, while I am hoping to go to New York City to study dietetics. Marriage has certainly resulted in an increase in ambition and a more serious realization of life for us.

We have been able to make adjustments to each other which are necessary to any successful marriage without the financial stress which accompanies so many early marriages. I believe that much unhappiness and divorcement would be avoided if parents would aid young people in their marriages rather than be so ready to say, "I told you so." I certainly believe that my husband and I will be more likely to stand by each other in the inevitable problems of earning a livelihood than we would have the first year.

I am willing to admit that there are some disadvantages to continuing in school after marriage; for instance, early marriage earns little respect from older people, especially "old maid" school teachers, who, no matter how broadminded, cannot avoid regarding the student as a rash, silly child, little capable of serious intent.

**Advantages of delay.** Assuming the physical development of the body, there are three chief advantages in delaying marriage that are stressed by those who for social reasons advocate the postponement of marriage until a later period than that of the body maturity. The first of these is the desirability of concentrating upon educational preparation for life or upon the vocation already entered without the distractions and the economic limitations that would presumably come with marriage. It has been common opinion in America among the intellectual and ambitious classes that early marriage proves a decided handicap in continuing one's education or in getting a foothold in business or a profession. The ministry and medicine are two exceptions to this general attitude that professional advancement is hampered by early marriage.

So strong in the past has been this objection to marriage before education has been completed that within a generation colleges have made the marriage of a student the cause for expulsion. When the college student did marry he usually tried to conceal the fact until after the day of graduation, since its discovery was certain to lead to dismissal. In a similar way those in charge of business undertakings frowned upon the marriage of persons who had recently entered upon training but who expected to advance to higher positions. At the same time it was generally taken for granted that the clerks and routine



workers who had little hope for improvement of status might wisely marry. The feeling was that those who were executive timber needed to avoid the burdens and hazards of matrimony. For example, the single man was freer to move from one locality to another and thus to take advantage of an opportunity the married man with his responsibilities might not feel free to accept.

Although there has been some change on the part of both educators and business executives regarding early marriage, the general attitude remains the same, and the marriage of the college student or the beginner in business leads to criticism even when the young people enjoy economic security.

There can be no question that the single individual has greater social freedom and avoids more responsibilities than the married. But it is open to doubt whether the postponement of marriage always favors concentration upon study or upon work. Surely in some cases at least marriage lessens sex strain and a general restlessness, both of which in certain individuals make concentration difficult. If marriage brings greater responsibilities, it also is true that with it usually comes an incentive which helps rather than hinders achievement.

The question, When can one safely marry? cannot be settled by a general rule that matrimony must not be entered upon until one has completed his education or has become well advanced in business. It is a specific problem to be decided in the light of all pertinent facts including the personalities involved and the social and economic circumstances.

A second motive for the delay of marriage beyond the time of body maturity is the likelihood of a more satisfactory choice of mate than when the decision is made earlier. This assumes that there is need of intellectual and social maturity beyond that which characteristically occurs at the time of biological fitness for marriage. This idea is held strongly at the present time and with it usually goes the conviction that early marriage is likely to be dominated by physical attraction. A precocious commitment is made, and later with the further development of one or both members of the union, there comes separation with an ever-decreasing fund of common interests. How can one know his own mind in making so fundamental a decision as that of matrimony before considerable experience and numerous contacts with members of the opposite sex?

Although there are evidences of the extra hazards of very early mar-



riage, as has already been pointed out in this chapter, there is not so strong an argument against it from the facts now known as the strength of the conventional attitude would indicate. There is no way at present of finding out how much unhappiness is experienced by those who have retreated from their first strong impulse to marry and have entered matrimony on a more sophisticated level with another individual. How frequently these individuals look backward wishing they had made a different decision can under present circumstances not be known. On the other hand, it is equally true that we have no substantial evidence as to how often those who married early have regretted or have been satisfied with their procedure.

Not only is the issue largely determined by the social circumstances of the persons concerned, but we have no exact measurements for what we term happiness. It also is relative. This it is which brings out clearly the danger of precocious matrimony. Biologically the attraction may be fundamentally sound; the issue whether the union is to prosper or not depends for its answer upon what happens in the social development of the man and woman who have married early. If they cease to grow, or if one advances beyond the sympathy and understanding of the other, the mating becomes disastrous.

As social conditions are at present the risk of this is great, but the fact that in the recent past delay of marriage has proven expedient for the great majority does not justify the present belief that this is necessarily the proper program. A biological choice in which physical attraction plays the larger part may, given favorable circumstances for the continuation of intellectual and social growth, prove a wiser policy than the attempt to establish the convention of marrying at an age level when intellectual and social influences predominate.

If, however, early marriage lessens opportunity for mental and social development, as is undoubtedly true in most cases, it is a mistake. Thus there is need of differentiating between what is prudent and promising under prevailing circumstances and what should be looked upon as the ideal marriage program. Experience shows that there is a great temptation for those who marry early to cease mental growth and to settle down in a routine which not only obstructs social achievement but gradually from sheer monotony undermines the physical ties which were so prominent in bringing about the marriage.

The third argument against early marriage, that is, marriage at the

attainment of biological maturity, is the need of greater security than can come so early in life except to the few who belong to families of wealth. This especially has importance in its relation to parenthood, an experience which must always be thought of as potentially present in the problem of early marriage. Until the family as an institution is more securely protected by society, early marriage jeopardizes the economic and social security of children except for those who arrive at their largest earning capacity very early in life, and for the wealthy. Extreme economic struggle in any family takes from the child a fair start, especially in the cities where the family income so largely determines the character of the environmental influences in which the little child must develop his life. Even if parenthood becomes so subject to volitional control that no child needs to be born until the parents have reached an economic security that prevents serious economic struggle, the effort to finance a home is in certain cases so detrimental to matrimonial happiness that there would still be a reason for discouraging the intellectual and professional classes from early marriage. It is true that for some, early struggle tends to deepen fellowship, as was so generally true in the American frontier when land was free and general agriculture the common means of support.

Ordinarily even parents who themselves have successfully passed through early economic stress hesitate to see their children enter upon a similar ordeal. In some instances it must be confessed that they have grown timid or are merely making use of the economic argument to postpone a marriage that they do not wish to see consummated. Although this sometimes is true it would not be just to the feeling of most parents to refuse to recognize that their position is based upon the risk they now realize they ran in their own career and upon their observation of the failures of others who have not met the economic difficulties of early marriage successfully.

**Disadvantages of early marriage.** If all the advantages were on one side of the question, When is it best to marry? there would be a much simpler problem for those who have to decide between marrying and waiting until they have arrived at greater economic security. There are three important facts that challenge any considerable postponement of marriage, once affection has been placed and the body has fully matured. The first is the habit-risk that becomes greater the longer the delay continues. The single life carries with it an entirely different set of conduct patterns than that associated with

marriage. It follows that the longer one remains single, the greater the danger that the accustomed habits be too strong to permit ready adaptation to the intensely intimate association of matrimony.

There is, of course, great variation in the firmness of the habit-life that is built up before marriage, but except in rare instances the man and woman who have remained unmarried after 25 tend to form habits which lessen the ease of adaptation. After 30 this hazard increases rapidly. Even in the case of those whose habits remain flexible enough to permit them to adapt easily to new circumstances, there is unquestionably some loss of valuable human experience that comes to those who marry earlier and in the middle twenties build fundamental patterns of behavior in the fellowship of mutual affection.

This habit problem is not, as is sometimes assumed, important only for the husband and the wife. Frequently the child born to parents who have married late suffers the consequences of a relatively firm habit-life built before marriage. In some instances, as is frankly confessed by parents, the child cannot have the full companionship he needs because his parents are too old or too set in their ways easily to enter into the play and to respond to the spontaneity of the child.

A second fact of importance that must be weighed in making a decision as to when to marry is the possibility, particularly in the case of the woman, of being left isolated and hampered in the making of a new alliance as a consequence of a long engagement which due to the death, illness, or change of attitude of her lover does not lead to marriage. The woman who approaches the thirties and finds herself denied the marriage she had expected must, if she still seeks matrimony, compete in her association with marriageable men not only with women of her own age but with others who are younger and who because of this ordinarily have an advantage. It is a common belief and probably could be demonstrated if ever statistical evidence is gathered, that the widow has a much better chance at remarriage than has the woman whose expectation has been defeated by the death, change of sentiment, or some misfortune of her fiancé, to find a second candidate for matrimony.

In the program of those who, having become fixed in their affection, postpone marriage, it is clear that more is involved than merely the dangers of a long engagement. Whether the formal contract to marry is made or not the mere going on unmarried is itself hazardous, and more so for the woman than for the man.

The third fact, and probably the most serious disadvantage of marrying late, is the long period of strain of which most men and women become conscious once they have become physically matured and cannot marry. This means more than sex tension in any narrow sense, although the significance of the biological urges is not to be underestimated. It is more than a body craving which urges individuals toward marriage. The desire for the intimate responses of marriage fellowship comes forth from the entire personality. The conditioning processes that are played upon the individual from early childhood all lead naturally toward the desire for mating, once physical maturity has been accomplished.

This period of stress is serious for any normal adult but especially for those who have finally discovered their love partners and who on account of economic circumstances or social responsibilities must check their desire and continue the single life no longer desired. This is a matter that many parents minimize. Their imagination does not bring back the memories of their own frustrated feeling, for in looking back upon the struggle that followed early mating they overestimate its importance and do not recall the tension that they by marrying avoided. They therefore urge upon their children unnecessarily lengthy engagements, often without realizing the serious consequences that result from their policy.

#### *Case 8*

The situation of C illustrates such a parental attitude. His father was well to do and had subsidized his education through the university and the medical school. After graduation C was ready to marry and professionally it would have been an advantage to him. There was no objection regarding the girl of his choice. His parents insisted, however, that he should not marry until he had repaid them the cost of his education. Apparently their motive was not because they felt that they needed the money but because they considered it advisable for him not to marry until he had become economically independent. This meant the postponement of marriage for at least five years and perhaps more after the time of graduation from the medical school. The young man felt bitterly that his father's demands were unjust to the girl whom he desired to marry, but since there was no changing the parents' edict, he had to decide between acceptance and defiance which meant in his case not only that he would alienate his parents but immediately find himself financially pressed. At present he is still waiting as he attempts to clear off his debt while hoping that his father will change his attitude.



This case is representative of the type of problem that is frequently brought by students to instructors in whose judgment they have confidence. Sometimes the real motive of the parent is to break off the engagement or to prevent the son or daughter from ever marrying. Cases of this sort also are frequent on the campus, but they do not belong in this discussion.

**Effect of delay on married life.** It is not enough to consider the significance of the stress period only during the time before marriage, since it also has consequences that appear after matrimony. One of these is the possible effect of a long wait on the sex life. There are two different dangers toward which both the young man and woman are tempted. The first is to find a temporary and irresponsible relationship as a means of eliminating sex tension. This may mean for the man prostitution and for the woman sex freedom with much or little promiscuity. This second choice may also be that of the man who, repelled by commercial prostitution, finds in his association with women of his own class the means of eliminating physical tension.

Neither choice is for the man or woman a happy one. Aside from all moral considerations the prostitute damages the later sex relationships of marriage by leveling down the experience to an exclusively physical plane. Freedom, although it lessens the exploitation, increases liabilities of a social character while at the same time tending to strip sex of the idealization which normally belongs to love attraction.

If the opposite policy is assumed by the man and woman, of attempting to suppress sex as a means of eliminating stress, an attack has to be made on normal impulses that come forth from biological sources. If this smothering of sex expression continues long it naturally weakens sex desire, at least in any conscious normal expression, and this frustration cannot be without significance in the sex life of the man and woman, once marriage has occurred. However justified one may be in assuming this risk of a long delay as the wisest way of meeting the specific problem, it is not therefore an ideal choice nor one that should be forced upon men and women through parental or social pressure when it is avoidable. However expedient it may be for the individuals concerned, as a social program it is unfortunate, for it antagonizes the seasonable entrance into matrimony.

It is extremely difficult to come to any clear conclusion, judging from the medical literature at present available, regarding the signifi-

cance of delay in marriage to such an extent that child bearing occurs at a later period than the twenty-ninth year. The subject is complicated by the fact that there are so many other circumstances that influence child birth experience aside from that of mere age that the latter cannot be easily studied by itself. The statistics gathered by Cohnstein<sup>1</sup> before the days of modern antisepsis have undoubtedly influenced the common tradition. Leopold Meyer<sup>2</sup> advances the theory which he believes, that the greatest difficulty of the older women was not due to their age but to the fact that this group of women who conceived late is more likely to include individuals that have physical defects of a structural character.

Dr. Margaret Schulze summarizes as follows the situation as she sees it:

The dangers and difficulties of labor in elderly primiparas have been somewhat exaggerated.

Speaking generally, neither foetal nor maternal mortality is increased above levels generally accepted as normal and the average duration of labor is only slightly prolonged. About 20 per cent of the women have strikingly rapid and easy labors.

Dystocia may be expected in about 15 per cent of the cases but is usually dependent on complicating factors.

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## CHAPTER IX

### CHOICE OF MATE AND ITS MOTIVE

**Pressure toward choice.** The pressure toward a choice of mate is for the most part unconscious, but nevertheless substantial. With few exceptions the young man or woman during the later part of adolescence takes it for granted that some day he or she will marry. This expectation registers personal inclination which of course is enforced by the biological urge even though this may not be clearly recognized in the thinking of the individual.

The social pressure that directs this impulse toward a permanent union usually exerts itself early in the life, even in childhood, and comes from various quarters. Social pressure represents one of the strongest conditioning influences brought forth by the prevailing culture. A life ideal is gradually constructed by these social suggestions, which by the time of adolescence has become a conscious impelling motive, which, when explored by analysis, reveals a multitude of influences from parents, schools, churches, literature, and nearly every source of social education. There are exceptions numerous enough to deserve consideration, in which antagonistic influences lead away from the thought of marriage and make matrimony, once it occurs, a choice that involves emotional conflict.

Even in lives in which the current of suggestion has from early years flowed consistently toward an eventual marriage, there commonly arises, once a definite commitment has been made or is about to be made, doubt and hesitation because marriage even to the young and inexperienced seems a momentous decision. The line of demarcation between serious distrust and an apprehension so common as to seem almost natural is in some cases difficult to draw, but ordinarily the distinction is easily recognized. Although it is true that the conditioning during childhood and youth tends for the most part to encourage marriage, there usually goes with it stress of the dangers of wrong choice, and in the tension so common during the last days of engagement these warnings are remembered, leading the cautious and reflective type to question the desirability of marriage. Frequently



the reaction of consciousness is not so much that the mate is not the proper choice as it is a feeling of personal unfitness to enter upon the union.

**Likeness and attraction.** It is axiomatic that however strongly individuals are attracted to each other by sex appeal, they seldom desire to marry and never do so safely unless they share in large measure similar social backgrounds. Even when complementary qualities contribute to the fellowship, the basic characteristics are the sympathies and understandings that similar environment have brought about. This explains the very great hazard of marriage between men and women representing great differences in races, in cultural opportunities, in economic circumstances, in disposition and tastes. Uniformity repels, but the variation that attracts is of individual rather than group origin. Ordinarily this advisability of similar social conditioning does not act as a serious barrier to inclination, since for the most part we like those who belong to our own group and feel alien to those who are radically different.

Sometimes young people read into their fellowship with some member of the opposite sex a significance that is borrowed from their relationship with another individual, so that the basic sympathies that are assumed prove in time not to have been present. In the case of fixation on the parent we have an illustration of this, in which the great differences that are present are for the time concealed by an emotion that is transferred from the love of the parent. The following case is an illustration of this.

#### *Case 9*

Miss S. is a very well-educated girl. Her father is a surgeon, and owns a large and very pleasant sanatorium near a large western city. Miss S. spent her childhood near her father, in rather close association with hospitals, and later lived at the sanatorium with her parents. She was educated in very good schools, and has spent parts of the last three years abroad, part in Philadelphia, and part at the sanatorium. When she goes abroad, her mother accompanies her. She is very attractive, and has always been popular with men. Several men have been in love with her, and she likes attention, but has not shown any deep affection for any one man. She has a very keen mind, and is very much interested in writing, which she has studied to some extent. Social life and the general excitement of New York has always appealed to her.

Last winter while in New York Miss S. met Mr. M. He is a hopeless

cripple. He was injured during the war in such a way that he has lost the use of both legs. His condition is such that he will probably live only five or ten years longer. He is thirty-eight years old—eighteen years Miss S.'s senior, and is financially independent, being able to live in New York in moderate luxury. Although rather frail-looking, he has a pleasant personality, is quite cheerful, and is well educated. After an acquaintance of about two months, Miss S. married Mr. M., and they returned to the sanatorium to live. Here Mr. M. spends a great deal of the day in bed, and the rest in a wheel chair. His wife talks with him, reads to him, and spends a great deal of time writing. She still enjoys social life, and would like to travel, but she very seldom goes out for fear of hurting Mr. M. Mrs. M. wants children, and although Mr. M. is neither impotent or sterile, he feels that in his present condition and in view of the fact that he will probably live for only a few years, they should not have children.

She has almost worshiped her father, and in discussing her husband has often said, "He is more like Father than any man I ever met." This seems to be a clear case of a father fixation. She is an only child, and from the beginning has been somewhat spoiled. She has had every luxury and a very substantial allowance. Because of this, she has been able to do almost as she pleased, and has developed the faculty of making positive decisions for herself. Her father agreed to the marriage after a telephone call from his daughter without having met Mr. M. I believe that Mr. S. realized his daughter would have her own way, since he was not near enough to stop her, but I believe if he had understood the situation more fully, he would have done his utmost to prevent the marriage. Miss S., when she told him she wanted to be married, did not tell him all the facts.

Although Mr. and Mrs. M. have been married only three months, Mrs. M. is definitely unhappy. She is beginning to tire of the quiet and uneventful life which she is forced to lead.

**Desirable traits.** It is common for authors who write on problems of mating to stress qualities that should be sought in any contemplated marriage. It is questionable whether the rehearsal of abstract qualities, however desirable they may be from the point of view of an ideal marriage, is helpful. We do not marry an abstraction. We cannot even demonstrate the advisability of a definite marriage by cataloguing the advantageous qualities each of the two individuals possesses. Marriage fellowship is not unlike that of friendship. We choose our friends because we like them and we do not dismiss them when we discover their faults, unless the defects are such as fundamentally to antagonize our attraction. No one would question the

fact that there are certain desirable qualities that one would wish to see possessed by any individual entering marriage. The list is as extensive as the life-values of the persons who draw it up. Good health, humor, industry, judgment, courage, patience, unselfishness, faithfulness are some of the virtues that nearly any thoughtful person would include. It is obvious that however desirable these are, mating under present cultural conditions will never normally be based upon a search for some one who provides the particular combination of qualities that appears most valuable to him who desires a mate.

On the contrary, the temptation to rationalize is almost irresistible. Once we like an individual it appears a treason against love not to find evidence in him or her of qualities considered highly desirable. We discount those that are clearly not present and resent an outsider's criticism of the individual to whom we feel attracted by the love impulse. This does not mean, however, as one might suppose, that there is no value in emphasizing the ideal. It is rather that in the formative period while the personality is in process of being made, the parent, teacher, and counselor have the best opportunity to create tastes and expectations that will influence the choice of mate in the adolescent period when likes and dislikes shall have been built up by the conditioning process. It is certain, as Wordsworth said, that we are not seeking to marry angels and do not determine our choice by an objective analysis of virtues and faults, but it is true that the right preparation for marriage during childhood and youth will lead to hesitation when through acquaintanceship the discovery is made that the individual in whom we are interested has some defect of character, some limitation of culture, some twist of personality which we have been trained to regard as an obstacle to true happiness.

**Undesirable traits.** In a former chapter, from the point of view of eugenic mating, we have considered the important obstacles to successful marriage. Some of these are so hazardous that even legislation has been invoked to prevent the thoughtless and the careless from entering upon a union that is likely to prove a social menace. Individuals of good judgment will also consider as questionable qualities that are too individual or complex in character to be prohibited by law. Where such exist they surely ought to be frankly recognized and an attempt made to discover how serious they will prove in a life-long fellowship. Some of the most obvious of these are bad health, both physical and mental, chronic jealousy, ungovernable temper, in-

feriority feeling, dislike of children, inability to have children, bad heredity, both physical and mental, addiction to alcoholic beverages, vanity, laziness, natural irresponsibility, dependency upon relatives, and that subtle but exceedingly important deficiency which we may best describe as lack of integrity. Any one of these qualities, when once it appears, is serious enough to deserve attention and scrutiny before vows of marriage are made, and yet it is apparent to the most careless observer that there are individuals who have one or more of these defects in glaring form, yet have married and have made the mate happy. It is just as true that in other instances matrimony has gone quickly to disaster because the husband or wife has had a serious fault which made domestic harmony impossible.

Apparently the matter is complex because of differences in the demands of individuals and because there are compensations that sometimes make a particular marriage a going concern in spite of an undesirable trait possessed by one or both of the life partners which made the marriage questionable. In some instances at least the sex side of marriage explains the persistency of a fellowship which from other points of view was extremely hazardous. It must not be forgotten also that pride and professional necessity frequently cover up domestic dissatisfaction which has resulted from a serious defect of character in the mate.

There are conditions that are in no sense blemishes of character that also handicap marriage, and when they exist their significance for a definite mating should be carefully considered with absolute sincerity by both persons. Some of these are blindness, loss of hearing, deformity, the disability of the crippled, facial scars, chronic stammering, religious differences and wanderlust. These traits do not preclude marriage but they are impediments that should not be accepted without counting the cost.

**A choice of personality.** A marriage choice is not predominantly concerned with qualities nor with possessions, but with personality. This choice is not, as is often supposed, instinctive. It is as much the expression of personality as it is the seeking of a personality. There is no instinct that awaits expression until at a particular time it is stimulated into life as some one crosses the pathway of the lover. Every significant influence that has gone into the making of the individual who chooses provides the background for the attraction that is felt. The man and woman delight in each other because of what



each has become. As persons they are mutually attracted to each other and their fellowship is an expression of the desires and the needs of each.

Doubtless it is true, as psychoanalytic literature insists, that there are subtle and even unrecognized influences which may be thought of as coming out of the unconscious life which play no unimportant part in the concentrations of the love impulse, but this does not mean that in any part of the personality, even in the frontier or beyond the frontier of conscious knowledge, there is an inherited mechanism which suddenly springs into existence and apart from all other influences irresistibly draws the person toward some other human being in whom alone satisfactory love responses can be found. Whatever wells up from this area of experience outside the conscious recognition mingles with the accumulation gathered from family and social contact, from traditions and from cultural suggestion. Just as surely as these various influences fill the personality, so in like manner do they determine the kind of person toward whom love will be felt.

It is equally true, once the union has been consummated, that the satisfaction that will be felt by the man and woman in their life together will be in proportion to the delight each continues to feel in the presence and through the fellowship of the other. Apparently it is not always true, unfortunately, that the personality that strongly attracts is the personality that brings through the wear and tear of everyday life a continuous satisfaction. There are, however, cases in which an increasing dissatisfaction in the matrimonial experience of two individuals who were once strongly attracted has, when understood and analyzed, led to reconciliation and a fresh start, culminating in the achievement of happiness. This suggests that in many instances if the original attraction were given more favorable circumstances after marriage, with mutual willingness to face difficulties, and eagerness to achieve happiness, the marriage would work out successfully. In any case the attraction and the happiness are matters determined by the personality of the man and the woman.

Although it is not possible nor even desirable to attempt a cold-blooded microscopic analysis of the emotion of love, since one cannot both have the emotion and deal with it in so objective a manner, it is possible and advantageous to know what to expect in a genuine attraction. The test that Newell W. Edson has drawn up is suggestive in helping one to detect the seriousness of a growing love interest. In

addition to the awakening of sex desire, which the author undoubtedly takes for granted, he gives ways of testing the love impulse. One, a genuine interest of the boy in the girl—Edson treats the matter from the man's point of view, but what he says is equally applicable to the girl—and in all that she is and does just because it is she and not some other. Two, a community of tastes, ideals, and standards, and the absence of serious clashing. Three, strong desire to be with her and the finding of greater happiness in her presence than with any other. Four, the feeling of unrest and dissatisfaction when she is absent. Five, genuine comradeship at all times, a willingness to give and take. Six, eagerness to consider justly her opinion and judgment. Seven, the feeling of pride in comparing her with any other. Eight, a wealth of things to say or things to do when they are together.

The usefulness of these tests comes, as is at once apparent, from the fact that they are a means of revealing the amount of sympathy and satisfaction brought forth by the association of the two distinct personalities. Aside from the sex element which intensifies and especially flavors the association, they are the same sort of tests that we would use in the effort to discover the desirability of a growing friendship. They are tests not so much for the purpose of discovering qualities as for the purpose of finding out the strength, the durability and the wholesomeness of a personal relationship. It is in the continuous contact of person with person that each individual marriage meets its supreme testing, revealing whether it is a fundamental craving of personality need or merely temporary fascination.

It is the person we crave, and for this eager desire there is no substitute, at least for those who marry in accord with the prevailing American cultural traits. This fact has its implications, some of which must have detailed treatment at a later time. Some of these are the inevitable hazards in matrimonial choice, since the decision as to whether the choice leads to a mating of personalities that can find in each other continuous satisfaction can only be demonstrated by the wear and tear of everyday association in the relationship of husband and wife. It is not strange that because of this there has been from time to time suggestion of some preliminary trial in the spirit of experiment. This is discussed in Chapter I.

Another important implication is the ease with which, during the formative years preceding later adolescence, the parent influences the character standards that will influence choice, and the great difficulty

as well as the seriousness of the risk of any interference once the choice has been made. Another implication is the necessity of each individual who enters matrimony having determination to carry the fellowship to success and to realize from the beginning that faint-heartedness in meeting the difficulties of mutual adjustment adds immeasurably to their inherent hazard.

Any one who takes a serious attitude toward marriage would admit that there are certain qualities, in themselves desirable, which one would always wish to find in his or her mate. The most noticeable of these are sex vigor, a normal attitude toward sex, physical and mental health, and, ordinarily, fertility; in the case of the woman, the ability to meet safely the ordeal of childbirth, and the willingness to acquire housekeeping skill; for both a knowledge of the value of money and prudence in using it, and companionableness, that a comfortable fellowship may at all times be maintained.

Common observation shows that there are at least occasional happy and successful marriages in which one or more of these desirable qualities is absent. The situation is exactly that which we find in friendship. In spite of obstacles which might theoretically be expected to spoil the relationship, a happy fellowship is maintained. This teaches us again to emphasize the fundamental condition of successful mating. It is the personality in its fullness, the appeal of a living person and not the presence or absence of some quality, a relationship which satisfies or disappoints, that decides whether the union is to be progressively satisfying or increasingly a disappointment. Marriage is essentially an adjustment, a unique relationship of two personalities who are happy or unhappy together because of what they are.

The following case reveals the consequences of an imperfect companionship. The original attraction was not enforced sufficiently by a mutual craving one for the other to make the union happy.

#### *Case 10*

Mr. H. N. came to a small town in northern Ohio from a theological seminary as a summer *supply*. There were many more young women in this community than men, and in part because of his position, he was soon extremely popular among the young women of the neighborhood. His interest was turned toward Miss Y. As it later appeared this was largely because she was more well-to-do than any of the others, having in her own right a small bequest of some \$10,000. His courtship was impetuous and marriage occurred in the early fall. It developed after the

wedding that the husband expected the wife to support him while he went on with his last two years at the seminary.

The third year of marriage a girl was born. Upon leaving the theological seminary H. N. settled in a rural community in Maine. He has never had a large church and has never been able to stay in any community more than four years. The wife's property was rapidly spent and had largely disappeared by the time of his graduation. As this money was dissipated his ardor rapidly cooled and with brutal frankness he informed her that he had married her merely for her money. She was terribly shocked but soon was confronted with a more serious obstacle to happiness. He began the practice of never speaking to either wife or child if this could be avoided when they were in the privacy of their home. His only exceptions were when he scolded one or the other for failure to meet his wishes.

For ten years there has been no comradeship. Meanwhile the wife has been ill and forced to go to a hospital for an operation. Without doubt the cause of her trouble was venereal infection brought her by her husband. The woman is now sterile and her husband reproaches her for this. He begs her to get a divorce from him so that he may marry again. This she would do if she were able to support herself, but her condition of health is such that she has to depend upon him for maintenance. To save the family from financial disaster she has to assume the responsibilities of a minister's wife in a small village. Sunday after Sunday she listens to his preaching although the life he leads is so cruel that there can be little doubt that he is psychopathic. He has not spoken a kind word to either wife or daughter during ten years. On the contrary anything that he can do to hurt her seems to give him pleasure.

**Conditioning influences.** A conditioning influence that deserves attention is the significance of age. A great difference in age, ten years or more for example, adds to the natural hazards of mating. This is largely but not exclusively because of the importance it has from the point of view of physical sex. For example, we frown upon the marriage of the old man with the young girl whom he has tempted into matrimony because of his wealth, on account of the difficulties such a marriage immediately presents or soon brings in the sex adjustment of the two individuals. We recognize also that since man commonly matures less rapidly in his sex life than woman, or at least he carries his sex potency to a later period than does the average woman, it is hazardous for the man to marry a woman much older than himself. Here as elsewhere we have to recognize that there are exceptions, that the danger may be safely met when there are other in-



fluences that offset this particular liability. The marriage of Robert Browning to Elizabeth Barrett is an example of such an exception. We also recognize and by legislation and public opinion attempt to discourage the marriage of the adolescent boy or girl of sixteen years or less, even though he or she may appear physically mature.

Aside from the physical handicap resulting from such a precocious union we react unfavorably to a cutting short of the courtship experience. Personally I have been interested by the resentment felt and expressed in confidence by men and by women who have married very early and after considerable matrimonial experience have regretted not the marriage but its precocity.

It is commonly recognized also that a long delay adds an unnatural hazard. A rough generalization, which registers both biological conviction and common opinion, is that the uneducated and imprudent, whose recklessness seems to be a product of their lack of training, marry too early in this country at the present time while the educated and cautious tend to delay marrying too long. The hazard of the latter comes from their long experience as unmarried adults leading to a fixing of habits which makes adjustment more difficult than it would have been in earlier years. Since age has an important bearing upon the choice of a mate, it needs recognition at this point, but it is a problem that must be treated in all its ramifications in a later chapter.

The choice is conditioned by experience as well as by age. A wide range of contact not only clarifies and makes more conscious likes and dislikes, it also tends to increase the demands that the sophisticated personality makes of the other. A choice made on the basis of a meager association becomes for the ambitious and progressive abnormally hazardous. It is similar in character to a very early marriage. On the other hand, a prolonged period of intermittent interest appears to lessen the force of love by encouraging a fickleness such as is notorious in the flirt. However, any generalization must allow for numerous exceptions, for with some individuals, once a protracted courtship period ends in marriage, concentration appears to be a relief and the one-time flirt becomes unusually domestic. The general trend is in the opposite direction and there are cases not a few in which the young man or woman who has made one attachment after another finally through inability to fix the affection permanently fails to marry.

In addition to the advantage that wide contact gives in awakening the stronger likes and dislikes by providing a wider range from which

to select the life partner there is also the stimulating value of which Lester Ward has written.<sup>1</sup> Ward considers the marriage of persons who have shared the same environment during the period when their personality was being constructed as more socially deteriorating than the marriage of a brother and sister who had been brought up under unlike conditions. Unquestionably variation, if not too great, in the influences that have operated upon the man and woman who marry does tend to strengthen their union and make for growth of personality. In this respect marriage acts in accord with the social tendency that we see on a wider scale in the consolidation of cultures through conquest, amalgamation and contact. The effect of race mixing on the primitive level with its fusion of cultural traits has for the most part stimulated social achievement. It is this that Ward wishes to emphasize by his exaggerated illustration. A marriage choice may lead to monotony of matrimonial experience because of lack of variation in the environmental influences of the man and woman just as surely as great differences in class, in race, and in religious faith may make the establishment of sympathy impossible.

**Change in motives.** With the increase of age and the multiplication of experience there tend to be changes in the strength of the various motives that lead toward marriage. In late adolescence physical attraction has a dominance that seldom appears at a later period. Sex appeal and beauty of face and form are the most conscious kinds of attraction. At a later time prestige, economic advantage, comfort and companionability ordinarily take precedence. The desirable choice of the early twenties is one that permits a progress from this stress on physical attraction to mental and social congeniality and life-coöperation. At any period of time the motives that lead to marriage are numerous, but their complexion changes with age and experience and the happy marriage responds to this evolution of personal need.

**A good choice.** Even though successful marriage is a relationship resting upon the attraction one personality has for another, it is not difficult to see emerging from the association the characteristics that testify to the wholesomeness of the choice. One of these is the mutual satisfaction that each person continues to find in association with the other. A second is the complementary character of the relationship, which makes the united life stronger and more complete than

<sup>1</sup> J. Q. Dealey and Lester Ward, *A Text-Book of Sociology*, p. 211.

that of either by himself. A third is the wearing quality of the association and the ability to keep from falling down to a prosaic routine and monotonous relationship. The fourth is progressiveness in companionship so that the fruits of matrimony may be gathered according to their season and without regretful looking toward the past both husband and wife may go on together finding as they change in their love-responses the satisfaction of supreme intimacy.

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## CHAPTER X

### THE ENGAGEMENT

**Purpose of engagement.** Modern culture has developed a relationship preliminary and preparatory to marriage and has given it a legal meaning. In spite of its significance as a contract to marry, the force of which is recognized by law, it represents primarily the desire of the two persons concerned rather than a responsibility forced upon them by social convention. When courtship prospers it leads to the mutual fixing of affection and this in turn creates need of a public recognition of a special relationship. The betrothal expresses the wish of both the man and the woman for a sense of security and exclusiveness in their love.

From the point of view of its function as related to marriage, the engagement, by removing uncertainty in their relationship, provides favorable conditions for each person to become well acquainted with the other before making a commitment which is presumed to be a life union. Ordinarily during courtship there exists a degree of doubt as to whether the association will mature into marriage and so long as this exists it is difficult for the couple to be perfectly normal in their association. There is a sense of competition, usually a fear of rivalry from some other man or woman, a tension which makes it difficult for either person to be entirely natural; but until they are their ordinary selves, they cannot have the conditions necessary for becoming thoroughly acquainted and absolutely sure of their affection.

It is evident that there is a basis of conflict between the idea of the betrothal as a contract to marry and its value as a period of final adjustment before two interested persons enter upon the status of marriage. They cannot thoroughly know each other until they have assumed a relationship which the law interprets as carrying contract responsibility, yet if one of them learns through the association of the engagement that marriage is undesirable, a discovery better made before than after the wedding, any effort to withdraw from the promise to marry brings the liability of legal damages. In most cases, fortunately, this collision between the two purposes of the engagement



does not arise, because either the engagement is broken by mutual consent, or there is no desire on the part of the disappointed man or woman to collect a money penalty from the other, or there is no means by which such damages could be obtained. Incidentally, light is thrown upon the attitude of the law by the fact that it is almost impossible for the man to collect damages for broken betrothal by suit at law and that it is getting more difficult for the woman than was true formerly when her economic security depended so much upon marriage.

**Length of engagement.** It is obvious that there cannot be any set rule regarding the length of engagement. Each case must stand by itself, for judgment of actual circumstances alone can decide whether the betrothal status should continue between the two persons concerned or whether they should enter marriage.

Although there can be no fixed rule, it is clear that there is hazard in a very brief or a very long engagement. At the present time it is commonly felt that a period ranging from three months to a year is reasonable. Much depends upon how long a courtship has preceded the engagement and upon the circumstances that prevail during the period of engagement. Anything less than three months carries risk that there shall not be a reasonable time for a frank and normal association, free from the element of contest formerly existing in courtship.

On the other hand, it is generally recognized that an engagement of more than a year is often unfair, since it gives each of the parties claim to an exclusive relationship over the other while at the same time it pushes marriage forward into an uncertain future. It is felt that this situation is especially unfair to the woman, who is supposed to withdraw herself from much association with other men, to be left finally if the marriage does not ensue considerably older and perhaps as a consequence handicapped in any new effort to find her life mate.

It is also true that when a long engagement is continued under circumstances that involve constant and intimate association between the man and woman there is risk eventually of considerable tension, usually in consequence of continuous sex stimulation. This carries with it the temptation to anticipate in fullness the intimacy of marriage which in turn brings the hazard of accepting the privileges of marriage with none of its responsibilities or security. An anti-climax of relationship as a consequence of prolonged tension or unrestrained

intimacy is likely to occur. What promised to be a happy mating is aborted by the unnatural strain of an excessively long engagement.

The characters of the persons concerned, their patience, understanding, and amount of common interests have a determining influence on the length of engagement desirable in any specific case, just as do social circumstances such as geographical separation or the necessity of the man's limiting his association with his beloved on account of the need of applying himself to education and professional training in preparation for his chosen vocation. The more distinctly physical the attraction, the greater the danger of trouble from either a short or a long engagement. If the period before marriage is very brief there may be practically no testing of character, the entire interest being sexual in character. On the other hand, under similar circumstances the long engagement, unless new interests spring up, will create extraordinary tension or lead almost irresistibly to a sex intimacy that anticipates marriage.

**The engagement a new relationship.** It is evident that with the coming of engagement there is a change in the relationship that distinguishes it from the preceding period of courtship. There is apt to be greater frankness, more freedom, and increased constancy between the two in their relationship, as well as a larger expression of affection. This is all as desirable as it is natural, but it is not without possibilities that may endanger the final marriage or hamper the later life union.

The important thing to keep in mind is that the engagement is not marriage and does not carry the finality and the security of matrimony. For a multitude of reasons it is unwise to regard the freedom of the engagement as equal to that which convention and law recognize only after marriage has occurred. Failure to recognize the difference between betrothal and marriage leads not only to much suffering but at times to a marriage which either the man or the woman or both do not want because of change in feeling. So frequently does this happen that it falls within the observation of almost any adult acquainted with the problems that grow out of courtship. Sometimes the wedding is forced, against the wishes of both man and woman, by a third person who has come to know that the marriage status was anticipated during the engagement and who insists, however the couple themselves feel, that they are socially obligated to marry. In some

of these cases pregnancy, or suspected pregnancy of the woman, is the motivating cause of the forced union.

There is also present always the danger that if intimacy proceeds far enough to shock the moral or conventional attitudes of either the man or the woman, this will be reacted against unfavorably even though marriage occurs. It is not true as many assume that it is always the woman who, in looking back upon the engagement experience, after marriage will react unfavorably. From information that has come to me through confidential consultation I am inclined to feel that it is the man rather oftener than the woman who in retrospect reacts to excessive freedom during the engagement with antagonism or regret or even with a deep-seated suspicion of his life partner, which makes affection difficult.

One of the consequences of engagement tension is the secret wedding which occurs rather more commonly than is realized by parents and campus authorities. It, of course, legalizes the intimacy desired during the engagement period, but it is not as a rule an ideal entrance into marriage and certainly carries considerably more hazard in the building of a happy union than is associated with the orthodox marriage. This is true even in cases in which one set of the parents concerned knows what has happened and has given approval. The very fact that the relationship is concealed creates opportunities for trouble. When the secret wedding is nothing more than the legalizing of a swiftly developed sex attraction between a man and woman who have little in common along other lines, genuine happiness is seldom achieved and divorce often follows.

#### *Case 11*

I am a young man, age 20, and I was married last June. This was and still is a secret marriage. I courted my wife for about two years before our marriage and was very fond of her and thought that she was very fond of me. In a way she was more responsible for the marriage than I. I am a student in ——— University and plan to study medicine. I tried to explain to her that we had too long to wait before we could live together. I told her that we would probably meet some other persons who would attract our attention and we would not love each other any more. I told her that if anything should happen I could not possibly take care of her, because I had to continue my education. All of this talk did not get me anywhere. So I married her.

She is 21 years old and from a very good family. Her father is not

rich but makes a good living. She is the only girl and has been much spoiled. She has nearly anything she wants. She has a Dodge roadster and goes anywhere and at any time she pleases. She has had one year at college and plans to go back next year.

We got along fine up until about three months ago. I don't mean that we did not quarrel any for we did, but in no serious way.

She is living at her home and her mother is the only one who knows of our marriage. Her mother is very kind to me and seems to be willing to do anything for me that she can.

About three months ago it seemed that we were beginning to drift apart. I could notice some change in her letters, but I did not think much about it. She went with a boy in her home town for about six years before we were married and she still goes with him some. She knows that it is against my will but that does not seem to matter to her. I asked her not to go about with him and tried to show her why she shouldn't, but it did not seem to change her conduct. She knows that I don't expect her to stay at home and never have a date. I told her that I didn't mind her having a few dates so long as they were with the right sort of boys. I felt that I would be asking a little too much of her not to have any companionship at all, since I am away at school and cannot see her often.

She came up here to see me about two weeks ago and she seemed angry all the time she was here. She hardly talked any at all and treated me very coldly. She asked me to act as if we had not married. She hinted that she wanted to be free again. This was a great surprise to me and I hardly knew what to say. I finally told her that she could do as she pleased. I asked her what she wanted to do that she could not do at present. She did not reply.

I have decided that she has grown tired of what she wanted; tired of being married and away from her husband, although she knew at the beginning that we could not be together very much. I think she is probably in love with the boy whom I mentioned above and loves him more than she loves me. It seems that she wants to go with him and since she knows that it is against my will, she is willing to take the circumstances as they come. I have decided that the best thing to do is to let her try doing as she pleases and learn her own lesson. If she decides later that she is wrong and that she loves me, then all is well, and *if she does not, she is not the kind of wife that I want.*

**Confidence and confessions.** One of the perplexing problems that arise in the engagement which at first would seem to require only sincerity for its solution is the question, How far can a young man and woman go in confidences and confessions? The matter involves



both honesty and judgment. If it were only a matter of honesty it would be easy to lay down a rule; namely, that nothing should be withheld but that each should reveal in perfect frankness to the other the ideas and experiences significant in the past career of each. However, the problem is not so simple. Youth takes personal happenings seriously and never more so than during the latter part of courtship. This makes trouble in two directions and tends to make the individual occasionally overconscientious and eager to confide while at the same time it leads the other to exaggerate anything that may be related.

The matter is further complicated by the ease with which sensitive persons acquire the feeling of guilt because of excessive morbid reaction to past experiences that are significant merely because of the emotional quality that has become attached to them. The engagement should not be made an occasion for confessing one's past merely in the effort to be relieved of guilt feeling. This is unwholesome, a sign of weakness of character, and distinctly unfair to the other individual who is idealizing the person to whom he or she has been drawn by love. It leads to an emphasis on past happenings that makes them seem significant out of all proportion to their real meaning, since the listener can only assume that they must be of great consequence, otherwise they would not be rehearsed with such evident feeling. It is, of course, the introvertive personality that is most tempted to commit this fault of attempting to make the beloved a "Father Confessor."

On the other hand, the strongest moral obligation rests upon the engaged individual to give to the affianced one any information that is really pertinent in discerning the kind of character of the person he or she is marrying and the particular hazards connected with their mating. For example, any one who has had venereal disease, even if it is pronounced cured, should let the other know the facts, since there may be less certainty of cure, especially in the case of gonorrhea, than is assumed, and later if the matter is discovered it may be interpreted as willful deception. Other illustrations of information that ought surely to be given the prospective life partner are serious illnesses of childhood or youth that may have permanently weakened the body, bad family inheritance, immoral or criminal relatives, strong prejudices, debts, dislike of children, and in the case of women hostility toward the idea of sex intimacy.

Although judgment is always involved in making an honest decision

as to what should be said and what should be withheld, the principle of decision is clear. Any information that helps the betrothed to discover the problems of adjustment that will follow marriage or any information that would create justifiable hesitancy to marry must be given in a spirit of fair play. The tendency is for the selfish and careless to tell too little and for the thoughtful and conscientious to tell too much. In cases in which there is serious doubt as to whether certain facts should be stated or whether the desire to talk about a particular thing is born of an overconscientious exaggeration of its importance, perhaps the best that the troubled person can do is to seek advice from an experienced person who is not so friendly as to be a partisan counselor. Unquestionably, such problems are often brought to doctors, and until the profession of domestic counselor is well established the physician is likely to be the best choice that can be made by the person who needs an outsider's advice as to what is right and wise.

**Breaking the engagement.** The engagement can have little value as a preliminary testing of the relationship before marriage unless with it goes the possibility of breaking off the relationship. No one will deny that it is unpleasant at so late a period in the courtship to admit that the idea of marriage has been a mistake, but it is surely far better that it be recognized, even at the eleventh hour, than that the marriage be consummated against the judgment or desire of one or both parties concerned.

The most important reasons for breaking an engagement are the following. (1) If either individual changes in his feelings toward the other. This is an unhappy outcome, but if it is a fact, the sooner it is faced, the better for both the man and the woman. To continue the program leading toward marriage as a solemn duty is a costly mistake sure sooner or later to bring disaster. Marriage under such circumstances is only justified when the individual whose feelings have changed is responsible for bringing the other to a situation that deserves protection and sympathy even at the cost of his bitter personal disappointment. Even under such circumstances it has been found in the experience of the social worker that forcing a marriage on account of the pregnancy of the woman only solves the problems involved when the motive of marriage is something else than a fear of penalty or an obligation inflicted by social opinion devoid of any sense of justice.

(2) If for some reason there arises serious doubt concerning the

right to marry or the wisdom of carrying out the promise to marry, it may be clear that the engagement should be broken. Here, however, there is need of recognizing the element of doubt previously discussed which arises just before marriage, the sort of hesitation that one always feels upon entering a new experience.

(3) An engagement should be broken if it has been made merely because of pressure from relatives or from circumstances, or if the breaking of the engagement is deeply desired but feared merely because of the publicity it will bring. One does not like to admit that he has been led on to committing himself to the idea of marriage through the influence of other persons, but if this be the truth, the sooner it is recognized, the better for all concerned.

If social or economic circumstances change there should at least be an offer made to break an engagement which the other person on account of what has happened may not want to carry through. For example, if the man gives up his occupation and turns to something new, or if his economic circumstances or those of his relatives change in a marked degree from what was true when the engagement was first made, it is only fair that he should let the woman decide whether under these different circumstances she still wants to marry. If for any reason the young woman finds that she is not willing to give up the career which she thought she was ready to put aside for marriage, and feels that she cannot forgo the conditions which both previously assumed would prevail after marriage, she in justice should let the man she has promised to marry know her altered attitude. Likewise, if accident leads to a physical disability of any sort, or if ill health comes, it is surely unjust not to offer release to the other individual, who may not want to run the risk of marrying a cripple or a chronic invalid. In these circumstances it does not follow that the engagement must be broken but at least opportunity should be offered to the one who runs the greater risk to make the decision as to its continuance and not have forced upon him or her what is not now desired.

**Who breaks the engagement?** No matter whether it is the man or the woman who breaks the engagement, ordinarily our social code insists that this be made to seem the decision of the woman. The reason for this is that nearly always she is more likely than the man to suffer if there be any unpleasant social consequences. It is an act of chivalry that is expected of him, and in most instances his duty at this point is clear.

It is most desirable not to have bitterness arise in either the man or the woman because of the breaking of the engagement. Whether this happens or not is of course largely decided by the circumstances causing the decision and by the temperament of the disappointed individuals, but the spirit in which the break is made has no small influence. In no experience in life is there more reason for sympathy and frankness, and it may be added, firmness, than when a man or woman must ask release from the promise to marry.

**Legal damages.** The law considers the promise to marry a legal contract, the breaking of which gives grounds for suit for damages. Occasionally the newspapers report a breach of promise suit, almost always based upon the claim of a young woman that some man of wealth has broken his promise to marry her and has damaged her reputation or lessened her chances for matrimony. A considerable number of such cases appear to the layman purely mercenary in motive, and it is assumed in many instances that the threat to institute suit is not far removed from blackmail on the part of the gold-digger type of woman. Unquestionably in the past claims for damages when engagements were broken were more reasonable, since it was true that frequently the young woman's chances of marrying some one else were lessened and sometimes she met with criticism and suspicion because of her lover's unwillingness to marry her, but now that woman has approached man in economic and social independence, breach of promise suits are out of accord with modern culture and rarely seem just.

It is to be expected that the decisions of the courts will slowly move toward a recognition of the social changes that have taken place, removing the grounds for allowing damages because of a broken engagement, at least in cases in which there is not evidence of clear and specific injury to the woman. It is socially desirable that the man be as free as the woman to withdraw from a promise to marry. The following citation from court decisions emphasizes the contractual interpretation that the engagement still receives in the courts of law.

Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, 1818.

15 Mass. 1, 8 Am. Dec. 77.

We can conceive of no more suitable ground of application to the tribunals of justice for compensation, than that of a violated promise to enter into a contract, on the faithful performance of which the interest of



all civilized countries so essentially depends. When two parties, of suitable age to contract, agree to pledge their faith to each other, and thus withdraw themselves from that intercourse with society which might probably lead to a similar connexion with another—the affections being so far interested as to render a subsequent engagement not probable or desirable—and one of the parties wantonly and capriciously refuses to execute the contract, which is thus commenced; the injury may be serious, and circumstances may often justify a claim of pecuniary indemnification.

When the female is the injured party, there is generally more reason for a resort to the laws, than when the man is the sufferer. Both have a right of action, but the jury will discriminate and apportion the damages according to the injury sustained. A deserted female, whose prospects in life may be materially affected by the treachery of the man, to whom she has plighted her vows, will always receive from a jury the attention which her situation requires; and it is not disreputable for one, who may have to mourn for years over lost prospects and broken vows, to seek such compensation as the laws can give her. It is also for the public interest, that conduct tending to consign a virtuous woman to celibacy, should meet with that punishment, which may prevent it from becoming common. That delicacy of the sex, which happily in this country gives the man so much advantage over the woman, in the intercourse which leads to matrimonial engagements, requires for its protection and continuance the aid of the laws. When it shall be abused by the injustice of those who would take advantage of it, moral justice as well as public policy dictate the propriety of a legal indemnity.<sup>1</sup>

The grounds recognized by the courts for damages in breach of promise suits are exceedingly broad, including injury to the plaintiff's reputation, disappointed affection, worry, and mental suffering. Recovery for seduction is usually allowed even where, as at common law, the plaintiff could not separately sue on this ground. There is also great liberality in the allowance of punitive damages, although this is unusual in other suits for breach of contract. Extortionate amounts are usually demanded by the woman, and as a rule the decision of the jury is clearly influenced by the physical attraction of the plaintiff and by the amount of the defendant's wealth. In 1915 as much as \$116,000 was awarded by a Maine jury. This decision was set aside on appeal to a higher court. In 1929 in Michigan \$450,000 was awarded by a jury in a breach of promise suit.

<sup>1</sup> J. W. Madden, *Cases on Domestic Relations*, p. 521. For other interesting decisions see pp. 527-28 and 532-40.

At present no state requires that an agreement to marry be made in writing, although this has been advocated by some critics of the present situation. Only six states by statutory law limit the time for bringing breach of promise suits. In five of these the suit must start within one year of the breaking of the contract, while in Washington state it must be within a period of three years. In the other states the period of limitation is made by interpretation of the court. In five states, Connecticut, Idaho, Michigan, New York, and Pennsylvania, the defendant may be arrested in a breach of promise suit, although this is an exception to the general rule that arrest is not permitted in contract action.<sup>2</sup>

## SELECTED REFERENCES

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- Oliver M. Butterfield, "Engagement." (Pamphlet)
- A. Herbert Gray, *Men, Women, and God*, Chap. IV, "Falling in Love and Getting Engaged," pp. 47-51.
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- Paul Popenoe, *Modern Marriage*, Chap. IV, "The Educational Period," pp. 113-147.
- Margaret Sanger, *Happiness in Marriage*, Chap. V, "Engaged," pp. 69-81.
- Chester G. Vernier, *American Family Laws*, Vol. I, Part II, "Contract to Marry—Breach of Promise."
- Vogue's Book of Etiquette*, Chap. XXIV, "Engagements and Their Consequences," pp. 417-439.

<sup>2</sup> For the discussion of laws and decisions of the states in regard to the contract to marry, see C. G. Vernier, *American Family Laws*, pp. 23-42.

## CHAPTER XI

### LEGAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR MARRIAGE

**Legal marriage.** In a narrower sphere than that in which public opinion, religious influence, and moral control operate, the state undertakes by statutory law and common law to determine the conditions for the entering of marriage, the basis for divorce and annulment, and the responsibilities of the marriage relationship. It is the first of these that concerns us in this chapter. As is true of all social legislation, the decisions of the courts and the state and federal laws relating to marriage have a double value. Educationally they act to establish wholesome standards, and they also operate as a restriction, preventing the union of at least a part of those who are socially or physically unfit.

At first thought it would seem as if the state ought to go farther than it does in the requirements that it imposes upon those seeking matrimony in its effort to elevate the standards of marriage and to keep out of matrimony those who, on account of their bad history, faulty character or lack of training, appear likely to fail in marriage or to keep to a low level of matrimonial experience. It is obvious, however, that the state is limited in what it wisely can attempt by repressive legislation. Marriage cannot be an aristocratic experience open only to the chosen few, and to try to make it such would prove both futile and unwise. Not only is it the firm belief of the average citizen that marriage is included among the human rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, an attitude which has been written into the common law of the land, but experience has proved that laws that make marriage too difficult stimulate vice and illegal union and thus defeat the intent of the legislation.

So strongly does common opinion resent restriction of the right to marry that the lawmakers are exceedingly conservative and progress through legislation has had to come gradually, each new enactment justifying itself to the prevailing public opinion. In practice it has been found that laws relating to marriage are difficult to enforce, the officials responsible for their administration often being lax and in-

different with the consequence that in the end many of the laws do more harm than good. The fact that for the most part the legal enactments that concern marriage fall within the province of the state rather than of the federal government acts as a handicap to progressive legislation, since the marriage laws of any state can be circumvented by having the marriages take place in some neighboring state where the qualifications for entering marriage are less strict. It is this that leads the reformer to advocate uniform laws in the various states and to limit the program to what seems under the circumstances obtainable and likely to appear reasonable to intelligent public opinion.

From a legal viewpoint marriage is both a civil contract between a man and woman and a legal status, that is, a relationship that is a consequence of entering upon the contract. Here we are concerned with the first in so far as it is expressed in laws defining the right to marry. As in the making of other contracts, the law assumes that those who marry are competent to make a decision and that they do so freely and in legal form. Each state, however, prescribes the qualifications that must be possessed by those who seek to enter upon the contract, and stipulates that the lack of any of these qualifications either nullifies or makes voidable the marriage even when it does not also make it a criminal act.

**Qualification as to age.** The idea of the age of consent for marriage comes to us from Roman law. It is based upon the obvious fact that those of immature age do not have the judgment that would make them competent to enter upon such an undertaking as marriage involves and are also, because of lack of physical development, presumably unprepared for the marriage experience.

In this discussion it is necessary to distinguish between the age of consent to marriage and the age of consent to carnal intercourse. The second is significant because upon it is based the definition of rape. It is also important to keep in mind the difference between the legal age of consent to marry without the consent of the parent and that which requires in some form the parent's or guardian's permission.

The states differ in their legal qualifications as to the age of consent to marriage both with and without parental approval. In 1925 there were fourteen states in the union that placed the minimum age for legal marriage with the consent of parents at fourteen years for boys and twelve years for girls. In practice administrative laxness in numerous cases made the requirement of parental consent of no



significance. In some of these states the requirement has been fixed by statutory law; in others it is the result of judicial decisions based upon interpretation of the common law or the presumption that the matter is determined by the common law.<sup>1</sup>

The general trend of state legislation in this country is toward lifting the age qualification for marriage, but it is very gradual and much resisted. At present the age of sixteen for girls seems to be widely favored while many social workers advocate advancing this to eighteen. In 1925 the minimum marriageable age for girls was twelve years in fourteen states, fourteen years in eight states and in the District of Columbia, fifteen years in eight states, sixteen years in seventeen states, and eighteen years in New Hampshire alone.

Part of the resistance to the lifting of this age requirement is due to reluctance to make it impossible for young girls who become pregnant to escape bringing forth an illegitimate child. It is also argued that the higher age requirement would tend to increase immorality on the part of those who, were they permitted to enter marriage, would escape the temptation of sex promiscuity. It is even insisted by some that any girl who has arrived at puberty is ready to enter upon marriage. This attitude, however, is rare and runs counter to common opinion.

It is true that not only are there great differences in the degree of physical maturity of girls of the same age, in which climate, race and heredity appear to play a part, but, what is more important, there is no conclusive scientific data upon which to decide the desirability of marriage in early adolescence. Such scientific evidence as we have, however, is in line with the prevailing opinion of social students. It is felt that marriage is unwise until the body has completed physical growth which by no means comes to an end with the coming of the possibility of parenthood.

The sociologists join the biologists in discouraging marriage in early adolescence, believing that it tends to shorten the preparatory period for the adult career by encouraging precocious maturing. Unquestionably there is evidence that the short-circuiting of the romantic period of adolescence leads in the experience of many of those who marry early to a loss of zest in marriage and a mental hardening that comes from economic struggle and child-bearing during the period of

<sup>1</sup> M. E. Richmond and F. S. Hall, *Child Marriages*, p. 20.

youth. On the other hand, in the interpreting of these experiences it must be recognized that a large number of these unions were made under adverse social conditions so that the consequences may have been more largely economic than the physiological results of early mating. However, in our civilization the social struggle is so tied with the economic hazard that the latter by itself would in most cases justify the restriction of adolescent marriage.

It is prophesied that the influence of American culture will lead to the placing of the minimum age of consent at eighteen years in common practice, with sixteen the limit below which there can be no legal marriage.<sup>2</sup>

From their study Richmond and Hall concluded that there were at least two-thirds of a million people living in the United States who had been involved as husbands or wives in marriages when the bride was less than sixteen years of age. Ogburn gives us the proportion of persons married according to various age groups. Basing his material on the 1920 census he reports as follows: <sup>3</sup>

There are very few persons reported married under fifteen years of age. Out of a total of 34,000,000 persons in the United States under 15 years of age and a total of 43,000,000 married persons of all ages there were in 1920 only about 9,000 married persons who were less than 15 years of age. There is an increase in the percentages married up until the age group 35-44 and then a decrease. Of persons 15-19 years of age inclusive 7.3 per cent were married; 20-24 years, 40.6 per cent; 25-29 years, 66 per cent; 30-34 years 76.5 per cent; while in the age group 35-44 years there were 80 per cent married.

As is generally known early marriage in this country occurs more frequently in rural sections than in the cities. Ogburn reports this difference: <sup>4</sup>

There are larger percentages of persons married in the rural communities than in the cities at every age group. At the ages 15-19, 6.2 per cent of the population are married in urban communities and 8.3 per cent among the rural population. There are, then, 2.1 per cent more married persons 15-19 years of age in rural districts than in the cities. In other

<sup>2</sup> Richmond and Hall, *Marriage and the State*, p. 130.

<sup>3</sup> E. R. Groves and W. F. Ogburn, *American Marriage and Family Relationships*, p. 179.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180.

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words, in this age group there is approximately a one-third larger percentage married in the country than in the cities.

Isolation also tends to influence youthful marriage. In the Southern Appalachian Highland there has been in the past a marked tendency toward early marriage, but this has been decreased recently as communication with the outside world has improved. In 1921 it was reported by Campbell that girls were regarded as old maids at eighteen and that at twelve and thirteen children left school to marry.<sup>5</sup>

**Proof of age.** The effectiveness of the laws of the various states which fix the minimum age of marriage depends upon the statutory provisions for their enforcement and the efficient administration of the officials who issue licenses. Although most states provide a penalty for any one who knowingly issues a license to a man or woman younger than the marriageable age, often no adequate provision is made for ascertaining the true ages. Commonly one or both individuals merely make an affidavit.

No one familiar with the administration of our marriage laws questions the fact that there is falsification, although some officials maintain that it is rare while others believe that judging from their own experience there is considerable fraud. Frequently when a couple asking for a marriage license discovers that one or both of them is under age they go to a neighboring town or county and make a second application, listing the statement as to age so that it comes within the provision of the law. The state of North Carolina has a stricter requirement than many, and it has been sympathetically upheld by the Supreme Court of the state. The law reads, "Every register who knowingly and without reasonable inquiring issues a license without the required consent where either party is under eighteen years shall forfeit two hundred dollars to any parent or guardian who sues therefor." The court has held that a mere affidavit is not sufficient to protect the issuer of the license and that reasonable inquiry must be such as a business man, acting in the important affairs of life, would make.

One reason why the law regarding minimum age is so easily evaded is the failure of the law to require the presence of both parties at the time the license is issued. Not only do some states not require the presence of both the man and woman for the obtaining of the

<sup>5</sup> J. C. Campbell, *The Southern Highlander and His Homeland*, p. 133.

license to marry, but even a third person may obtain the legal document without either of the candidates for marriage appearing in person. As a consequence, marriage has taken place on the basis of mere affidavit statement when the most casual observation would reveal that one or both of the couple were under age. Some officials go beyond the specific requirements of the statute and insist upon sufficient evidence of age when they have any reason to doubt the statement of the applicant. For example, several of the large cities have developed a regular routine, requiring a certified transcript of birth certificate, baptismal certificate, school record, or some other document equally satisfactory.

To make effective the statutory enactment as to the age requirement for marriage, it is necessary that the burden of truth be placed upon the candidates and that they be required to present such information as is insisted upon for the obtaining of a passport from the federal government or a work certificate in states where effective labor laws are enforced. The most satisfactory document would be a copy of the birth certificate, and now that the importance of birth registration is more commonly recognized, this can usually be procured. To provide for exceptions such evidence as baptismal certificate, school census age certificate and the like should be accepted. Experience gained in enforcing child labor laws is most helpful in showing the material that can be offered for proof of age. The New York Child Labor Committee states that in addition to the certificates already mentioned the following are available and of value in the following order: <sup>6</sup>

1. Immigration records
2. Naturalization papers
3. Insurance policies
4. Adoption papers
5. Records of social welfare agencies dealing with families and children
6. Census age records—federal
7. Census age records—local
8. Certificates of circumcision
9. Bible records
10. Confirmation certificates
11. Sunday school records

<sup>6</sup> Richmond and Hall, *Child Marriages*, p. 132.



12. Court records
13. Commitment records to institutions for children
14. Hospital and clinic records
15. Records of settlement clubs and classes
16. Vaccination certificates

**Annulment of marriage of those below legal age.** In spite of the fact that the law prohibits marriage below specific ages, once the marriage has occurred and has been consummated most of the states declare it valid. In nearly all the states, if it can be proved that the child at marriage was below the minimum age the court cannot refuse to annul the marriage. This legal situation makes possible a sort of trial marriage which is valid while it exists but which can be set aside at the request of the individual married below legal age. This peculiar system would be of greater social significance were it not that so many of our states have the minimum marriageable age for girls so low. In 1925 twenty-three states made it fourteen years or lower.<sup>7</sup>

**The consent of parents.** Most of the states that still have a very low minimum age requirement for marriage make necessary the consent of parents for girls who marry between the ages of twelve and eighteen or boys between fourteen and twenty-one. It is rather generally felt that this is a safe provision—a sentiment which constantly appears when changes in the laws regulating marriage are discussed in the state legislatures—and that parents can usually be trusted to make the decision because of their interest in the welfare of their children. It must be recognized, however, that occasionally this consent is obtained after the marriage has actually occurred or as a result of pressure against the real judgment of the parent. However, complicated as the matter is, there seems to be no better way to deal with the exceptional case, especially since unmarried motherhood still carries such serious social consequences. Often when pressure is exerted upon the parent it is in the effort to protect the man in the case from the crime of rape, or to save the reputation of the girl who is pregnant or who is known to have had sex relations with the man whom she marries.

**Physical health.** As one would expect, the states have been slow in passing laws to require conditions of health as a prerequisite

<sup>7</sup> Richmond and Hall, *Child Marriages*, p. 132.

to marriage. For the most part regulations thus far enacted have had to do with venereal diseases, a topic which deserves attention by itself. Even such legislation has been resisted, not only by an indifferent public opinion but by some students of the problem of marriage, of whom Havelock Ellis is an example.<sup>8</sup>

The most advanced legislation thus far in this country has been the inclusion of active tuberculosis as a barrier to marriage. The North Carolina law requires for both male and female a certificate executed by a reputable physician licensed to practice medicine and surgery in the state, stating the non-existence of tuberculosis in the infectious stages. The North Dakota law requires an affidavit from a duly licensed physician showing that the contracting parties are not affected with pulmonary tuberculosis in advanced stages. Such a statement as this latter one can perhaps be made by any competent physician who has opportunity for clinical examination. It is obvious from the discussion of tuberculosis in the preceding chapter that in the literal sense what is required from a North Carolina physician to fulfill perfectly the legal requirement would demand expert and detailed diagnosis, including an X-ray photograph and temperature and pulse record over a considerable period in addition to a microscopic examination of the sputum.

The law operates in so far as it has medical significance much as does the less exacting statute of North Dakota. Only in this more limited interpretation would it at present receive tolerance from common public opinion or the approval of the medical expert. Tuberculosis is known now to be practically universal among humans, and under proper safeguards even those in the advanced stages are not necessarily a menace to members of their family. On the other hand, it would be highly desirable if every candidate for marriage could know the exact progress any tubercular infection had made and the probable resistance of the individual even when the disease was quiescent.

**Venereal disease.** In 1925, Wisconsin, Alabama, Louisiana, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, and Wyoming had laws requiring that the male present a medical certificate stating that he was free from infectious venereal disease as a condition for the license to marry. The Wisconsin law as it stood in 1917 reads as follows:

<sup>8</sup> See *British Medical Journal*, May 12, 1923.

“1. All male persons making application for license to marry shall, at any time within fifteen days prior to such application, be examined as to the existence or non-existence in such person of any venereal disease, and it shall be unlawful for the county clerk of any county to issue a license to marry to any person who fails to present and file with such county clerk a certificate setting forth that such person is free from venereal diseases so nearly as can be determined by a thorough examination and by the application of the recognized clinical and laboratory tests of scientific research, when in the discretion of the examining physician such clinical and laboratory tests are necessary. When a microscopical examination for gonococci is required such examination shall upon the request of any physician in the State be made by the State laboratory of hygiene free of charge. The Wassermann test for syphilis when required shall upon application be made by the psychiatric institute at Mendota free of charge. Such certificate shall be made by a physician, licensed to practice in this State or in the State in which such male person resides, shall be filed with the application for license to marry, and shall read as follows, to wit:

“I, ..... (name of physician), being a physician legally licensed to practice in the State of ....., my credentials being filed in the office of ....., in the city of ....., county of ....., do certify that I have this .... day of ..... 19...., made a thorough examination of ..... (name of person), and believe him to be free from all venereal diseases. .... (Signature of physician).

“2. Such examiners shall be physicians duly licensed to practice in this State or in the State in which such male person resides. The fee for such examination, to be paid by the applicant for examination before the certificate shall be granted, shall not exceed two dollars. The county or asylum physician of any county, shall, upon request, make the necessary examination and issue such certificate, if the same can be properly issued, without charge to the applicant, if said applicant be indigent.

“3. Any county clerk who shall unlawfully issue a license to marry to any person who fails to present and file the certificate provided by subsection I of this section, or any party or parties having knowledge of any matter relating or pertaining to the examination of any applicant for license to marry, who shall disclose the same or any portion thereof, except as may be required by law, shall, upon proof thereof, be punished by a fine of not more than one hundred dollars or by imprisonment not more than six months.

“4. Any physician who shall knowingly and wilfully make any false statement in the certificate provided for in subsection I of this section

shall be punished by a fine of not more than one hundred dollars or by imprisonment not more than six months." <sup>9</sup>

There appears to be no doubt that the Wisconsin law is well enforced so far as it requires a medical certificate in proper form prior to the issuing of the license. But the effectiveness of the law has been questioned by many, especially physicians, on the ground that the medical examination is likely to be inadequate and in many cases a mere formality. Investigation has proved that a proportion of the certificates were issued by doctors who merely asked the applicant if he was suffering from venereal disease. That this has happened also in the state of North Carolina is known to the author of this text, although he is ignorant as to how often this occurs.

Physicians have criticized the so-called eugenic laws because they do not provide for the kind of examination necessary to certify the applicant free from syphilis and gonorrhea. In order to have medical significance the examination must at least include a Wassermann test for syphilis and a microscopic test for gonorrhea. In both cases several tests repeated at intervals of time are necessary for an authoritative statement. Even when the tests are made without cost at the state laboratories, the time and attention required of the examining physician are greater than can justly be expected from him for so small a fee as the state law provides, at present two dollars. A considerable proportion of the physicians appear not to make use of the free laboratory testing provided by the state.<sup>10</sup>

In the discussion of these laws the greater meaning of positive reaction to tests as compared with negative needs to be understood. For example, in the case of syphilis the positive Wassermann reaction announces the presence of the disease and justifies the withholding of the right to marry. On the other hand, a negative reaction does not give a guarantee that the disease is not present nor, if it is known to have been contracted, that it is cured. Several negative reactions with no positive reaction, at intervals extending over a considerable period of time, are necessary in all suspicious cases to fulfill the purpose of the law.

The situation is the same in the case of gonorrhea. The microscopic tests not only require great accuracy but a negative result does

<sup>9</sup> E. R. Groves, *Social Problems of the Family*, pp. 250-51.

<sup>10</sup> F. S. Hall, *Medical Certification for Marriage*, p. 38.



not have the significance that belongs to a positive result. Even the specialist treating gonorrhea hesitates to say when cure is complete, especially in the female. A positive reaction indicates the disease but a negative one does not surely exclude it. Therefore, several tests at successive periods and clinical examination are necessary to give any certificate the assurance the law contemplates. It is not surprising on account of these facts that the eugenic laws have met with opposition from many doctors.

Even if the laws against marrying without certification of the absence of infectious venereal disease cannot be carried out with a hundred per cent success, it does not follow that they are without social justification. There cannot be doubt that they have done much to educate the public as to the seriousness of syphilis and gonorrhea and the value of early diagnosis and treatment. The spread of information regarding these two diseases is particularly important since they have had a different treatment from all other diseases and their prevalence has been in part due to the ostrich-like attitude that has been taken toward them.

Nothing will stimulate progress toward their decrease so much as building up toward them the same attitude that is taken toward other forms of physical infection. The misinterpretation that is still common in regard to the seriousness of gonorrhea has been the result of public taboo. The same policy has been largely responsible for the failure of many victims of syphilis to seek early diagnosis and treatment, which provides the best condition for cure. Nothing could do more to bring these two menacing diseases into the open than this emphasis upon their danger in marriage. Besides this educational advantage from which physicians have profited as well as the general public, there can be no doubt that the laws have blocked in some instances the marriage of those having venereal disease in an obviously infectious state, and have led to treatment.

**Mental disease.** At the present time the laws of the states restricting marriage on the ground of mental unsoundness are confined to insanity, epilepsy and idiocy, and there is great variation in the statutory enactments. Even among those states that have restrictive legislation regarding insanity or idiocy or epilepsy we find great differences in the legal definitions that have been given the terms and also in the provision for enforcement. For example, it is obvious that the mere requirement that one take an oath that he is not insane or

of unsound mind or suffering from epilepsy has significance only as a possible means of later annulling the marriage when one of the individuals was legally incompetent.

The term insanity must be interpreted in its legal and not its popular significance, with the recognition that at present in the distinction between insanity and mental disease there is perhaps the greatest gulf between science and the legal system. It must also be remembered that the common law insists upon competency of understanding on the part of those who enter the marriage contract if it is to be valid. The practical significance of this, however, depends upon the specific decisions that have been handed down by the state court.

In Massachusetts the following decision still holds. It is not reassuring as to the effectiveness of the barrier erected by common law on the basis of incompetency:

Though the marriage of a person at the time *non compos mentis* is void, a person's ability to go through the marriage ceremony with propriety is prima facie evidence of sufficient understanding to make the contract, and mere dejection and singularities of conduct do not adequately prove insanity.<sup>11</sup>

The general attitude of American courts in regard to the voidance of the marriage contract when one of the parties is proven incompetent appears in the following quotation:

The marriage of one mentally incompetent is void, and according to the weight of authority, where for want of the requisite mental capacity on the part of one of the parties there has been no consent to the marriage contract, the purported marriage is an absolute nullity, and will be so decreed in any court and in any proceeding where the question may arise, whether during the lifetime of both of the parties or after the death of either of them. In some states, however, statutes have been passed designed to render marriages of this kind free from attack, except in proceedings for annulment brought by or on behalf of one of the parties.<sup>12</sup>

**Relationship.** Each state prohibits specifically the relatives one cannot marry. Here also various states differ in their legislation, but the following list shows relationships within which a man is pro-

<sup>11</sup> G. May, *Marriage Laws and Decisions in the United States*, p. 193.

<sup>12</sup> J. W. Madden, *Cases on Domestic Relations*, p. 576; Sothorn et al. v. United States (Morris, Intervener), 12 Fed. (2nd) 936 (1926).

hibited from marriage by the law of one or more states, and women are restrained within similar relationships: Mother, daughter, grandmother, granddaughter, sister, aunt, niece, grandaunt, first cousin, grandniece, first cousin once removed, second cousin, father's wife (stepmother), son's wife, grandfather's wife, grandson's wife, wife's mother, wife's daughter (stepdaughter), wife's grandmother, wife's granddaughter.<sup>13</sup> Such marriages may be declared void or voidable by the court. If merely prohibited the tendency is to announce them voidable only in accordance with the common law. The penalty provided by the statute on incest is usually included.

**Race.** Various states of the Union, especially in the South and West, have laws prohibiting the marriage of persons of white blood to those of Negro blood and some forbid the marriage of whites and Indians. Not only are such marriages held to be void but there is a penalty in many states for the attempt to contract them. For example, the Mississippi law reads:

The marriage of a white person with a Negro, mulatto, or Mongolian, or a person having one-eighth or more of Negro or Mongolian blood, shall be unlawful and void, and any party to such a marriage on conviction shall be punished as for marriage within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity or affinity.<sup>14</sup>

Marriage between those of Oriental and Caucasian blood is also illegal in some of the states. The California law prohibits the marriage of white persons with Negroes, Mongolians or mulattos. The law of Oklahoma goes so far as to prohibit the marriage of Indians and Negroes, declaring that the marriage of persons of African descent with persons not of African descent shall be unlawful and is hereby prohibited. It even makes void a marriage between a Negro and an Indian, citizens of Oklahoma, who have validly contracted marriage in some other state.

These laws register a general conviction in this country that marriage between representatives of diverse races is undesirable. The state of New York has no law prohibiting the marriage of blacks and whites, and in that state, excluding New York City, during the period of 1916 to 1924 "Marriages of negroes with white women numbered 146; of the latter 133 were native-born and 13 were foreign-born.

<sup>13</sup> May, *op. cit.*, p. 477.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 228.

Negro women who married white men numbered 54, of whom 37 were native-born and 17 foreign-born. Marriages of negro men with white women represented 2.8 per cent and marriages of negro women with white men represented 1.3 per cent in their respective groups.”<sup>15</sup> Pennsylvania and Illinois, like New York, do not prohibit marriage between Negroes and Caucasians. The statistics regarding such marriages in New York City, Philadelphia and Chicago would be interesting, but at present they are not to be had.

**The concealment of facts.** Since marriage is a civil contract, the courts have had to pass on cases involving fraud and duress. The spirit of these court decisions appears in the following abstract:

*Reynolds v. Reynolds.* 85 Mass. 605, 610 (1862) (3 Allen).

. . . There is no sound rule of law or consideration of policy which requires that a marriage procured by false statements or representations and attended with such results upon an innocent party should be held valid and binding on him. An enforced union under such circumstances would not tend to promote or give dignity or sanctity to the institution of marriage. On the contrary, it would tend to bring it into contempt, by compelling parties to continue in the relation of husband and wife after the basis of confidence and harmony has been taken away by the destruction of mutual respect and affection.<sup>16</sup>

**Irregular solemnization.** In states where the common law marriage is not recognized the statutes usually guard against a marriage that was contracted in good faith by at least one party and considered valid being set aside on the ground that it was illegal in form. Even in cases when the ceremony is performed by one who acts without right as a minister, the marriage, if one or both of the parties believed it to be valid and later it was consummated, is held valid in spite of the fact that it was performed without authority.

**Annulment.** In addition to the annulment of marriage because of its lack of legality, we have statutory law and judicial statement dealing with impotency or the incapacity for sex intercourse. In many of our states the law specifically determines whether impotency shall be a ground for annulment or divorce and whether the effect of annulment shall be retroactive or not. By the Vermont law venereal

<sup>15</sup> *Marriage Statistics New York State (Exclusive of New York City), 1921-1924 with Introductory Analysis of Marriage Statistics, 1916-1924*, New York State Department of Health, p. xxiii.

<sup>16</sup> Madden, *op. cit.*, p. 602. Also see pp. 603-27.



disease, making copulation dangerous, is held to be physical incapacity. Impotency must not be interpreted as the inability to bear children. Impotency, when known to the other party entering upon marriage, or when it reasonably would be presumed because of the age of the impotent party to the contract, is not a basis for annulment. Decisions have been rendered by the courts involving the question whether a marriage that is voidable on this ground may be ratified by long cohabitation, deciding the circumstances created a presumption of impotency, and as to the right to demand a medical examination to determine physical capacity.<sup>17</sup>

**Common law marriage.** In many of the states common law marriage is still recognized. Such a marriage is based upon the mutual consent of the parties concerned and does not include civil or religious ceremony. In 1809 Chancellor Kent in a New York decision held: "If the contract be made *per verba de præsenti* and remains without cohabitation, or if made *per verba de futuro* and be followed by consummation, it amounts to a valid marriage in the absence of all civil regulations to the contrary."<sup>18</sup>

At the present time at least half of the states of the Union recognize the common law marriage, but unfortunately they differ widely in their interpretation. The law of New York may be taken as an example. A contract *per verba de præsenti* between parties competent to be husband and wife constitutes actual marriage. Formal ceremony is not required. A contract *per verba de futuro* does not constitute valid marriage since an actual present agreement is necessary, the establishment of which requires clear evidence and not mere implication. Marriage, however, like other contracts may be proved not only by positive evidence but also by inference from circumstances, and although cohabitation and the reputation of being husband and wife do not in themselves constitute marriage, they are circumstances from which the fact of marriage may be inferred.

Common law marriages are no longer recognized in England or on the Continent of Europe, and the general trend in this country seems also to prophesy the final disappearance of this form of marriage. This trend, however, is resisted by a sentiment which is based upon the feeling that children should not suffer the penalties of illegitimacy because of the failure of their parents to be formally married. Un-

<sup>17</sup> Madden, *op. cit.*, pp. 583-584.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 566.

questionably this attitude was strengthened by conditions of the American frontier. Isolation and the difficulty of procuring religious sanction, due to the infrequent visitation of ministers and priests gave an incentive for the common law marriage which no longer exists.

The existence of common law marriage encourages blackmail and makes it possible for a mistress to claim the legal status of a wife after the death of the man with whom she has been intimate. It is also true that if the claim is successfully made during the life of either of the parties a subsequent ceremonial marriage of the other person may be made bigamous and any offspring illegitimate.

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## CHAPTER XII

### THE WEDDING

**Purpose of the wedding.** It is impressive to find in primitive society that some sort of ceremony announcing wedlock is practically universal. This is no accident. It does not indeed represent in the simple society of the savage a deliberate, self-conscious program for avowing the union, but it discloses the expediency, from the very beginning of social experience, of having a public acknowledgment of the mating of the man and woman. The advantage of this has not been single, related only to the need of establishing the responsibility of the husband and wife for the nurture and support of a child that might result from the marriage. In other ways also the marriage ceremony has had social significance, including property interests, family descent, and the code of personal behavior. Too much has been involved in marriage to permit it ever to be regarded as an individual matter, a relationship to be assumed without social publicity. The passing from the class of potential mates to the status of marriage needed to be known by the tribal members and the importance of this was itself sufficient to bring about a celebration of rites at the time of marriage.

In our own time the motives for socially registering the fact of marriage have increased, and it is now unthinkable that any society will tolerate mating unaccompanied by some sort of public avowal. There must be a method of determining whether the marriage is socially authorized, and once marriage has occurred a record must be made of the fact. The natural way to accomplish this is to have some sort of public ceremony required both by law and by social convention.

Another influence than utility has operated upon the marriage ceremony, and that is the emotional significance connected with the entrance upon the status of marriage. Matrimony represents one of the major emotional events of the human career and even in the most primitive of human societies marriage has stood out emotionally as have childbirth and death. Some sort of ceremonial celebration of the act of entering upon marriage would in any case have arisen as a

spontaneous expression of emotion. In our own time in addition to the legal ceremony itself we commonly have connected with the wedding minor conventions such as hectoring the bride and groom, showing them with confetti or decorating their motor car with ribbons, signs, or old shoes, that have been kept up as means of covering up or releasing the emotions stimulated by the marriage. Only by doing something can the parent, brother, sister, and friend hide the emotions they feel as they realize the loss of former comradeship which will result from the marriage.

**Legal preparation for the marriage.** The legal requirements for marriage differ among the several states, although the most essential prerequisites, such as the license, its presentation to the officiant, and his reporting of the marriage, are common to them all. The student should look up the law of his own state and become familiar with the details. The best summary that we have at present is Geoffrey May's *Marriage Laws and Decisions in the United States*, published in 1929. Since new legislation is being constantly passed, a report should be made to the class regarding the new enactments that have been made since the appearance of May's summary.

As an example of what one must do to be legally married, the requirements of the state of North Carolina are briefly summarized:

1. *Requirement of the marriage license.*—No officiant shall perform a ceremony of marriage until there is delivered to him a license for the marriage of the persons.

2. *An issuer of the license.*—License is issued by the register of deeds of the county in which the marriage is to take place or by his deputy.

3. *The cost of the license.*—For issuing marriage license the register of deeds shall be allowed \$1.00. Note: There is a state tax of \$3.00 on marriage licenses, paid to the register of deeds, and counties may levy \$1.00 on marriage licenses.

4. *Contents of the license.*—The license is addressed to any authorized officiant, sets forth the names, residence, age, race, and parentage of the parties; whether the parents are living, and their residence; parental consent, if required; and the absence of legal impediment; and authorizes the solemnization within the county within sixty days, stating the provision for the return of the certificate by the officiant.

5. *The recording of the license.*—The register shall enter in a book the substance of each marriage license and return, preserving the original license and return. *Penalty.* Any register failing to record the substance of any license issued by him shall forfeit \$200 to any person suing.



6. *Legal impediments.*—When it appears probable that there is a legal impediment to the marriage, the register has power to administer to the applicant an oath touching the legal capacity of the parties to contract marriage. *Administration of an oath is discretionary with the register.* *Penalties.* Every register knowingly or without reasonable inquiry, either personally or by deputy, issuing a license where there is a lawful impediment shall forfeit \$200 to any parent or guardian who sues therefor. Any register knowingly issuing a license for the intermarriage of a colored and a white person is guilty of a misdemeanor.

7. *Who may perform the ceremony.*—Marriage may be solemnized by an ordained minister of any religious denomination, or minister authorized by his church, by a justice of the peace, or among Quakers according to their custom.

8. *Presentation of the license.*—No officiant shall perform a ceremony until there is delivered to him a license for the marriage of the parties. *Penalty.* Every officiant marrying a couple without a license first being delivered to him or after the expiration of such license shall forfeit \$200 to any person suing therefor and shall also be guilty of a misdemeanor.

9. *Form of the ceremony and the witnesses.*—The consent of the parties, legally competent, presently to take each other as husband and wife, freely, seriously, and plainly expressed by each in the presence of the other and in the presence of an authorized officiant, and the declaration by such officiant that the parties are man and wife, shall be a valid marriage; but the rite of marriage among Quakers according to their custom shall not be interfered with. The certificate of marriage must be signed by one or more witnesses to the ceremony and on the record of marriages shall be put the names of all or at least three witnesses present at the marriage.

10. *The recording of the marriage.*—The officiant is required to return the license to the issuer within sixty days after celebration with his signature subscribed to the certificate under the license and with the blanks therein filled out. Every officiant failing to return such license and certificate to the register within two months shall forfeit \$200 to any person suing therefor and shall also be guilty of a misdemeanor.

Every register shall enter in a book the substance of each marriage license and return. *Penalty.* Any register failing to record the substance of any return within ten days after the return is made shall forfeit \$200 to any person who sues therefor.<sup>1</sup>

**Publishing of the banns.** The publishing of the banns was originally an ecclesiastical custom which existed in some European

<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey May, *Marriage Laws and Decisions in the United States*, pp. 315, 318-320.

countries before it became a church requirement by the Lateran Council of 1215. In recent years it has been revived by some of the states of the Union through legislation requiring an advance notice of intention to marry. In 1931 there were seventeen such states. These laws have all been enacted since 1897 with the exception of the requirement that Maine has had since 1858. Previously to its present law Maine from the time it entered the Union required a notice of intention to marry published fourteen days before the event. There are two types of law, one allowing the license to be issued at the time of application but not used until the required period of time has elapsed, and the other not permitting the license to be given until a stated number of days after the time of application. The second has proven the more effective law, since it is possible under the other procedure for the marriage to take place at once and to be misdated on the license when it is returned. The most commonly required period of time is five days, but one, two, three, and four days' notices are also found. North Carolina requires five days, but only of those who are under twenty-one years of age.

The purpose of these laws is to prevent illegal marriage, to discourage the marriage of non-residents of the state, and to give those who are marrying hastily and impulsively time to ponder before making the final decision. When one state makes the requirement and its neighbor does not, there is a disposition on the part of some of its residents contemplating marriage to go out of the state to escape the restriction. For this reason the law should be uniform in all the states. Most laws make provision for the waiving of the requirement by some competent legal authority in special cases. This is a necessary provision to escape the hardship of an absolutely rigid regulation. For example, cases of sudden illness of the man or woman who needs to marry in order to establish legal grounds for the inheritance of property, and cases of marriages that are hurried because of the pregnancy of the woman justify this provision for an immediate marriage.

**The validity of the marriage.** Marriage by its nature is not the kind of contract that should be lightly held invalid because of failure to fulfill the legal requirements for entering upon it. Some of these are relatively unimportant as compared with the advisability of not setting aside a marriage entered upon in good faith by one or both members of the union. In spite of violation of the requirements for

legal marriage, the contract is held to be valid since to allow it to be declared invalid would clearly be against public policy, offering opportunity for all sorts of fraud by those who desired a fictitious marriage.

One of the most common of statutes establishes the validity of a marriage consummated in the belief of one or both members that they were legally married, even though the ceremony was solemnized by some one without legal authority to officiate. Several states expressly declare that irregularities in the issuing of the license do not invalidate the marriage. In many states there still exists the need of more definite or complete legislation regarding the effect of infringements of the laws in order to prevent irregularities in marriage procedure from invalidating the union, rendering cohabitation illegal and children, when they exist, bastards.<sup>2</sup>

**Common law marriages.** The majority of the American states still maintain what is known as a common law marriage. The courts by their decision have held that marriages are legally binding even though they rest merely on the mutual consent of the parties concerned and were entered upon without ceremony, license, or officiant. It is claimed that the motive behind the common law marriage is the legitimatizing of children and protection of the legal rights of the woman. There is, however, at present in both the statutory law and the decisions of the court much confusion, inconsistency, and uncertainty of status, and because of this nearly all students of this problem recommend the abolition of the common law marriage by definite and clear legislation.<sup>3</sup>

**Time of wedding.** It is customary for the bride to decide the time of the wedding. This in part is a reflection of the prerogatives belonging to the woman during courtship, stressed by the convention that gives her the decision to marry or not to marry when the proposal is made. A more important reason why the woman fixes the time of the wedding is that she may be able to avoid its coming during her menstrual period. For this reason it is best for her not to have the date of the wedding set far in the future, since there would then be some risk of the wedding's occurring during menstrual time. Not only are many American women irregular in their monthly periods but they are also influenced by nervous strain. As a consequence preparation for the wedding may hasten or delay the monthly rhythm so that over

<sup>2</sup> C. G. Vernier, *American Family Laws*, Vol. I, pp. 98-102.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 102-110.

a considerable period of time there may be variation enough to make the time of the wedding come during the monthly flow.

**Forms of the wedding.** There has been in recent years a loosening of the conventions regarding the wedding so that now any couple is free to plan according to their personal inclinations. The different kinds of weddings range from the most informal and brief ceremony at the city hall, with the Justice of the Peace officiating, to the most elaborate church wedding of those whose wealth and leisure permit the extensive preparation, rehearsal, and expenditures necessary for such a pageant.

It is customary for the bride and her family to decide on the kind of wedding that is to be carried through. Formerly the bride usually expected and desired a wedding ceremony more elaborate than would have been preferred by the groom had the decision been left with him. This is less true than it was because there are now many young women who feel toward the matter just as does the man, and sometimes the formal wedding is the choice of the bride's parents rather than her own desire. Change registers in the fact that for the modern woman the wedding as an event in itself does not have the significance that once was given it, when it denoted a radical break from the courtship status of the woman and her acceptance of the male dominance that came with matrimony. The wedding now more often signifies an event in the development of fellowship which is merely continued, strengthened, and deepened after the union.

The first question to be decided in planning a wedding is whether it is to be formal or informal, then where it is to be held. It may be at the church or at the bride's home, and in the latter case there is the choice, at least in the summer, between having it out-of-doors and in the house. Experience shows that even those who choose to have an informal wedding find it difficult to keep it within the desired simplicity. Little by little plans are extended and because it is desired not to hurt the feelings of anybody the list of guests is increased. Many times these additions in elaborateness are brought about by suggestions of the relatives rather than by any change in the wishes of the young people.

The established conventions vary with the class and section but the formal wedding is most standardized throughout the United States. If this is chosen by the young people, they are expected to carry it out consistently in all its detail. Before announcing a formal wedding it



is wise to count its cost not only in money but also in time and preparation and nervous strain. The present generation of youth does not take kindly to pageantry and this explains the evident trends away from the elaborate and formal wedding.

**The cost of the wedding.** Although it does not happen so often now as formerly, occasionally one comes across a family that stages a wedding far beyond its means, even going into debt in order to put on the show. It is true, of course, that the more elaborate the wedding, the greater its cost. Extravagance is in bad taste and even less justifiable than the excessive funeral expenses to which a family may be tempted by grief. The informal wedding offers great freedom to the young people in the making of the plans so that the ceremony reflects their wishes and is not a stereotyped expression of the rules of etiquette as is true of the formal ceremony.

Although the cost of the wedding is expected to fall upon the bride's parents, it does not seem good sense for the ceremony to be turned into an expensive show far beyond a reasonable use of the family purse when later the young people start housekeeping under circumstances that emphasize the advantage that would have come from spending part of the cost of the wedding in house furnishing or in some other way that would really assist the young people in starting their matrimonial career.

In spite of the desirability of an unostentatious wedding, it will prove most unwise for the man to attempt to check his beloved's desire for an elaborate wedding. If her choice suggests lack of judgment, he may have misgivings, but it will be a mistake for him to interfere. It will not always be true that this preference for a costly wedding is a forerunner of extravagant taste, which will later make marriage a nightmare; it may rather be that she has always looked forward to an elaborate wedding, and if it is denied will forever feel that she has been cheated from one of her chief desires. In many cases, on the contrary, the attitude of the prospective bride does illustrate lack of economic experience and extravagant taste.

**Strain of the wedding.** The wedding must not be thought of merely in terms of expense. There is perhaps no family undertaking that leads to more tension than the wedding and its preparation. There is apt to be an extraordinary fear of some slip in the program, some noticeable mishap, some failure to carry out what is socially to be expected. As a matter of fact, these accidents do happen but are

often unnoticed by the guests, whose attention is less on details than those who plan the wedding assume would be true.

It is surely not a wise entrance into marriage for the young people to be so tired out, so nervous, so apprehensive, because of elaborate planning for the wedding and anxiety regarding its details, that they are ill prepared when the ordeal is over to start their matrimonial fellowship. It may be the ceremony rather than the fact of marriage which makes the groom feel that he has an hysterical bride, or makes the wife see in her husband a man lacking in the emotional control which she had always supposed was his. Tension connected with the wedding acts like any other strain in making a calm, sensible and mature beginning of marriage difficult.

**The elopement.** There is a sort of wedding which is occasionally reported in the newspaper as an elopement. This is an incorrect statement of what happens in most such instances. It is not that the young people run away to get married against the wishes of their parents, but rather that they marry sooner than was expected or without announcing beforehand what they intend to do. Usually they are not trying to escape parental wrath but are merely side-stepping the wedding ceremony which they feel their parents will insist upon. For example, in a recent case it was the grandmother who wrote me expressing her great regret that her grandson had married without permitting the family to arrange for a formal wedding. She assumed that his behavior was an insult to his parents and relatives and wrote with strong feeling her personal sense of injury. Clearly she was looking at the matter from the conventional point of view of her youth and was not taking into account the changes that have taken place. The young people kept their secret to themselves and were married quietly because they knew that if their plans were known she and other relatives would insist upon the very thing they were determined to avoid. It was not, as she insisted, lack of seriousness, for subsequent events have shown that the couple have been extremely happy since marriage. It was a deliberate effort to enter marriage in the quiet way they preferred.

Sometimes young people are married just before the time set for a formal wedding. In these cases it is usually true that the parents and relatives have interfered with the preparation for the wedding to such an extent that the young people have finally determined to get rid of it all by being married quietly a few days or weeks before the

date of the ceremony. A marriage of this sort is certainly not correctly described as a run-away marriage even though it does provide a good headline for the newspaper.

**The etiquette of the wedding.** Few people are so familiar with the wedding ceremony that they do not need on approaching their own experience knowledge of the etiquette which social conventions enforce. This is of course especially true of those who have agreed to have a formal ceremony. Like all other rules of etiquette, those concerned with marriage change from time to time. Those who are interested will find Emily Post's *Book of Etiquette*, put out by the publishers of *Vogue*, helpful, particularly since one can write the publisher regarding information if any doubt arises as to what is proper for the kind of ceremony that has been chosen. In addition to its interpretation of etiquette, the book gives both bride and groom helpful suggestions regarding the problems that arise in carrying out the wedding.

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## CHAPTER XIII

### THE HONEYMOON

**The origin of the honeymoon.** The evolution of the honeymoon, like that of many other social practices now firmly established, is difficult to trace. It is believed by some that it is related to the getting of a wife by capture. As the woman thus procured was at one time concealed from her relatives and associates, so now the newly wed leave those who know them and start married life among strangers. Our present social custom is merely suggestive of the former practice and the connection is a conjecture rather than a fact. How scanty is our knowledge of the history of the honeymoon appears from the fact that at present even its evolution in America from the Colonial period onward is yet to be written. The word does not once appear in the index of Calhoun's *History of the American Family*.

**The purpose of the honeymoon.** As Westermarck suggests,<sup>1</sup> the honeymoon provides a way of escape from the self-consciousness and shyness that young people usually feel when starting marital relations while in contact with their friends and relatives. From this point of view the honeymoon is related to the sex reticence which in part is rooted in the taboo of the past. We appear to find this reticence even in the simpler society of the savage.<sup>2</sup> In any interpretation of the current practices of primitive people the possibility, however, of the influence of the white man's culture must be kept in mind. Certainly the testimonies regarding the sex reticence of peoples on the lowest cultural level is conflicting. Unquestionably, as Briffault suggests,<sup>3</sup> the modesty of preliterate peoples at times centers about exposure rather than about sex intimacy. On the other hand, the anthropologist is familiar with savage peoples who in no degree feel self-conscious because of lack of clothing.

In our present culture there cannot be doubt of the social influences that tend to establish the sex shyness of which Westermarck writes.

<sup>1</sup> E. Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage*, Vol. I, p. 439.

<sup>2</sup> Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, p. 134.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Briffault, *The Mothers*, Vol. III, p. 260.



Unmistakable advantage comes to those who are self-conscious in the new relationship upon which they have entered through marriage if they visit for a brief period where they are unknown and unnoticed. Whatever the history of the honeymoon, its present value as a means of escaping self-consciousness at the beginning of marriage is now generally recognized.

**Honeymoon entrance into marriage.** There is another function that the honeymoon performs in giving newlyweds opportunity to start their life together under favorable conditions. Even with the franker and easier circumstances of the present, the average young man and woman face a considerable transformation as they pass from courtship into matrimony. The anticipations, the emotional fervor, and the friction never absent from courtship are replaced with the feeling of settlement, security, and even at times of possession.

Brief and insignificant as is the wedding as a period of time, it distinctly separates two very different forms of heterosexual attraction. It becomes the climax of courtship and the starting point of the marriage career. Not merely because of sex shyness is it an advantage for the young people to remove temporarily from their customary environment with its familiar friends and daily routine; they also experience less strain in taking up their adventure in living together if they have a brief vacation from ordinary haunts and associates. The impulse they usually feel to go away by themselves is so in accord with what experience proves to be desirable, that we recognize at once that something is wrong when we learn that the bride has entered upon her honeymoon accompanied by her mother or sister or some other relation or friend. The presence of any third person is normally resented. We can understand how the young bride felt in the case reported by Morton Prince,<sup>4</sup> when her husband left her waiting for several hours in her hotel room on the wedding night while he entertained in the lobby a close friend whom he had met there by accident. The young people's desire is to be by themselves, unhampered by any consideration of the other relationships that would need recognition in their ordinary association with friends and neighbors and kinfolks.

It is true that young people are forced at times to omit the honeymoon, and that they may suffer no serious difficulties because of this.

<sup>4</sup> Morton Prince, *The Unconscious*, p. 334.

In such cases, however, it is usually felt that their elimination of the honeymoon is expedient rather than desired. They are not free on account of circumstances to follow their preference. Sometimes at a later date they travel together and think of their excursion as a substitute for their lost honeymoon. It is obvious, however, that their trip together, however pleasant, has no genuine function in matrimonial adjustment. They have already passed through the critical early stages of marriage and they cannot retrace the period of adaptation, now past history. If when the honeymoon is omitted the young people start immediately after the wedding upon home-keeping by themselves, their program is less hazardous than when they go to live with the wife's or husband's parents. This tying up with another family is always dangerous and its risk is heightened by the omission of the honeymoon experience.

**Kinds of honeymoon.** A generation ago in the United States the honeymoon was a conventional affair. It usually consisted of a short railroad trip and a week or so of sight-seeing. Niagara Falls was the most popular place to visit, but its prestige began to decrease when its impure water was discovered to be the cause of a considerable number of typhoid cases. Although this menace, once it was known, was quickly ended, Niagara Falls never again became the vogue it had formerly been. At the present time Washington is credited with acting as host each year to more brides and grooms than any other American city or place of resort. On any day a visit to its Union Station will convince the observer that nearly every through train brings men and women who carry the suggestion of having just been married. A great part of the patronage of the hotels of Washington comes from honeymooners.

There is, nevertheless, a relatively smaller number of the newly married who follow the conventional honeymoon which the former generation accepted as a matter of course. The automobile has here as elsewhere brought sharp competition to the railroad. The motor ride from the place of the wedding to some neighboring city or famed resort offers decided advantages over the long, tedious railroad or steamship journey. For one thing there is greater privacy, and this is no small matter since the man and woman so often when they travel in public realize that through self-consciousness they are revealing the event which they wish to conceal. There is also the saving of nervous tension at the time of the wedding because they do not have to set a

definite time schedule and can start on their journey whenever they get ready. Even the cost may be less than a railroad trip to a distant city since they can regulate the length of their trip according to the amount of money they are free to spend.

It is common for those who take an automobile honeymoon to visit several different places before their return, and in this manner they escape the risk of monotony which formerly was felt by no small number of those who spent several days at such a place as Niagara Falls and after having seen the sights found themselves with nothing to do. Even their fellowship, however happy, could not prevent their realizing that they had exhausted the environment. The fact that the automobilist is free to travel by day and rest in comfort at night, and to shorten or otherwise change his route at any time, gives the motor honeymoon a decided advantage over every other sort for most people.

Some prefer a honeymoon program radically different from the common. One of these is the walking trip. It is comparatively rare, but occasionally one learns of a couple that have chosen a long hike. The Appalachian Trail over the White Mountains of New Hampshire has its appeal for some of those who like a honeymoon in the open air away from suggestions of modern civilization. A somewhat similar honeymoon is chosen by those who prefer to camp out. This appears to be more popular in the Rocky Mountain states and on the Pacific Coast than in the East. The type chosen ranges from the seaside cottage or mountain cabin to the shelter tent carried with the automobile. One enterprising landlord in New Hampshire specializes in log cabins which are advertised for honeymooners and which are used almost entirely by newly married couples.

The kind of honeymoon that takes one away from ordinary comforts and recreation is not to be entered upon lightly, for it is apt to prove disappointing and even irritating to those unaccustomed to roughing it a bit and untrained in the joys of the open road or wild nature. But for those already well disciplined to such pleasures the camping trip with or without the automobile provides ideal conditions for an easy entrance to the comradeship of matrimony.

**Fatigue.** Whatever the form of honeymoon chosen, it is most important that the significance of avoiding fatigue be kept in mind. Most individuals who go through the conventional wedding find that it brings more nervous stress than they had anticipated. This is true

even when the wedding itself is quite simple. The greater the excitement felt, the more certain the reaction that is bound to follow. Fatigue may not set in immediately, but, if there has been a marked nervous and emotional experience, the reaction must be expected sometime within the first few days of the honeymoon. On this account it is a decided advantage to have a program which is not itself tiring but offers an easy means of relaxation. A long journey does not fulfill these conditions, since travel under the most favorable conditions brings to most persons vivid stimulations and eventually fatigue. Once a person gets tired out he or she shows irritability, impatience and various other exaggerations of emotions that do not help the beginning of matrimony.

If travel seems desirable the trip should be planned most carefully. The city ticket office of any railroad will prepare a schedule, make reservations and estimate the cost, and it is bad judgment to start off without such assistance. Even the hotel reservations ought to be made in advance, for one can never know when he is running into a convention which has taken over all the available rooms. Indeed, it is well to ask the railroad official whether or not the chosen city is entertaining a convention and if so to choose some other place as a substitute.

Any honeymoon program that makes privacy difficult encourages self-consciousness, and one that does not provide conditions of physical comfort, with the exception of the camping out experience for those who have learned to enjoy it, brings fatigue and dissatisfaction.

**Cost of the honeymoon.** A great majority of those who enter marriage have from the start a considerable financial problem. It is well to take this into account in planning the honeymoon. It may seem strange that such advice needs to be given, but the fact is, there is a temptation to plan a more elaborate and costly honeymoon than is justified, and it is actually true that honeymooners who have not carefully considered their pocketbook find themselves at times embarrassed and are able to go on with their trip only by irritating economy or by sending back for more funds. Travel nearly always costs more than one expects. There are incidental expenses difficult to estimate in advance. Moreover the man has been accustomed to travel by himself and cannot be expected to know how much more it will cost because of the presence of his wife. The minor expenses that so rapidly count up in travel must be estimated liberally after one has obtained



an exact statement of the necessary expenses. It is surely better to give up the idea of an extended honeymoon than to attempt one that is beyond one's financial resources or that must be carried out under adverse conditions.

Probably no reader of this text will be likely to enter upon a honeymoon by joining a travel group. It would be inconceivable to think of a more unpleasant entrance to marriage than to be herded through a tour as members of a sizable excursion group. There are, however, tours that are planned so as not to necessitate association in a party. Such a scheme gives the advantage of a well-planned schedule without the constant close contact of the ordinary excursion tour.

**The length of honeymoon.** Even the wealthy, who are free to forget the question of expense and who may have no definite responsibilities so that they can spend as much time as they please, find a long honeymoon disappointing. At least one is impressed by the publicity of divorce proceedings that follow an extraordinarily long honeymoon trip, such as a voyage around the world in a private yacht. It is not good to be removed from familiar circumstances for many months at the start of marriage. It puts too much strain upon the association of husband and wife, creating an artificial situation.

For the average man and woman who have their work to do in the world a very long honeymoon is out of the question, but it is important to remember that the length is relative and that two weeks away from business in the case of the young man just getting started may lead to restlessness to return not unlike that of the wealthy man who has been away from his familiar environment for half a year. The young bride may resent the rising discontent which her husband cannot conceal as the honeymoon continues while he feels the need of being back home. For any young man who is ambitious and interested in his vocation more than a two weeks' vacation is apt to lead to an anti-climax, and usually if the trip is continued beyond that time the wife will also find herself longing to get back and start the new experience under normal conditions. Especially will this be true if she intends to keep house.

**Entrance into marriage.** There is the greatest need of removing as far as possible from the honeymoon irritating circumstances, nervous tension or any form of anxiety, because the young people need to enter upon their sex adjustment under auspicious conditions. Marriage of course means a new sort of adjustment in their relation-

ship, and a bad start is unfortunate. It is this which has led people to think of the honeymoon as a critical period in the association of the two individuals concerned. The meaning of this may, however, be exaggerated and lead to an over-seriousness, a dread lest some mistake or misunderstanding occur which, because of the state of mind of one or both of the couple, hampers natural entrance upon marriage. It is true that during the honeymoon grave blunders are committed which sometimes wreck the marriage. These have their significance, for they reveal selfishness, conflicts, or other unwholesome attitudes, due to lack of preparation for the experience or to flaws in personality, which sooner or later would in any case blight the union.

It is the difficulty of sex origin which is serious. Only superficially in such cases can the responsibility be placed upon what happens in the honeymoon, for the real trouble lies deeper and eventually, however successful the introduction to the sex side of marriage might be, would antagonize happiness.

The present lessening of the sex taboo and the greater availability of information regarding marital experience lessen the risk of physical adjustment. But these changes themselves do not remove the hazards of selfishness, insincerity and neurotic trends. In a fundamental sense the honeymoon period presents a test of character just as do the later experiences of matrimony. A good program includes the acquiring of information, patience, honest coöperation, and genuine affection. The success of the honeymoon most certainly does not depend upon perfect technique or sophistication along lines of sex. This statement does not minimize the advantage of a good adjustment from the start but it does justice to the complexity of marriage fellowship. The chief requirement for a successful honeymoon is that in this period when emotions run high and strong nothing shall occur that does violence to mutual trust, respect and love.

#### *Case 12*

#### AN UNFORTUNATE HONEYMOON

A and B were teachers who in their graduate study became interested in each other and after a few months of courtship married. Although both of them were accustomed to living in the city and had never had much experience with country life, they chose for some reason not at all clear to either of them later to camp out by themselves in the Maine woods an hour or more walking distance from the nearest small village. They prepared for the trip as best they could, but their choice of equipment

showed their lack of experience. Their imagination had pictured life in the wilderness as ideal. Apparently through some suggestion that came during courtship when they talked about their honeymoon they had been led into planning to camp out. The idea arose so spontaneously that neither, looking back upon the experience, could understand clearly how they had come to their decision.

There can be no doubt in view of subsequent events that they arrived at their place of camping tired and less than usually emotionally stable. It is not open to question also that they were the kind of persons who are popularly known as temperamental. Actually, from the viewpoint of the scientist, they were somewhat neurotic. At best their new relationship would have proven a trial, as indeed life itself had been for both of them in all previous associations, but they were not prepared for the solitude which they soon began to feel. The woman confesses that from the beginning she found sleep difficult in the new surroundings. They both suffered from the abrupt severing of their urban habits, but their introduction to marital intimacies went through without serious mishap. The loneliness in which they had placed themselves affected them adversely so that they became unusually sensitive and soon irritable. Each was conscious of the change in mood of the other and responded to it. Several minor quarrels started up during the first two or three days of their being together. Each of these was followed by regret and the expression of tender emotion, but their being together so constantly with no other interests and little to do resulted in each getting, as they later said, on the other's nerves. Soon neither of them was sleeping and both were suffering from an indigestion that was partly nervous in origin and partly the result of lack of skill in the difficult art of cooking in the open air, accentuated by the poor choice they had made of food materials.

Finally, one day, after a restless night during which each had found fault with the other, they walked a long distance and fished in a neighboring lake with meager results. After the two or three fish that they had caught had been brought back to the tent and cleaned, preparation for supper started. The bride undertook the cooking of the fish and while she was in the process, tired and hot, the husband mildly criticized what she was doing. Out of this, trivial as it was, a violent quarrel occurred, leading each to make extravagant and bitter accusations concerning the attitude of the other.

That night the wife became, as both later expressed it, hysterical, until the husband was actually frightened by her emotional outburst in which she cried continually and could not be comforted.

Instead of a pleasant experience the honeymoon became a nightmare from which both were glad to escape by shortening their camping out and

returning at once to the apartment which they had furnished in the city. As time went on it seemed impossible for either of them to forget the occurrences of their honeymoon, especially those of the night when the bride had so completely lost control of herself. They began to drift apart and, being intelligent people, realized their predicament and attempted to face it frankly.

After about two years during which they grew farther apart, they came for counsel, first the man and then the woman. There was such clear evidence of emotional instability that the aid of a skilled psychiatrist was also enlisted. The social and psychiatric assistance that they were given over several months' duration undoubtedly helped, particularly in creating greater sympathy for each other's difficulties, and a more honest understanding of themselves. In spite of this, however, they determined upon divorce. They were free now from bitterness and excessive sensitiveness but both felt that their marriage had been unfortunate. The man was willing to continue the experiment but the woman was not. Finally she left and went to a neighboring city, earning her living in her chosen vocation. She had by this time become more mature emotionally and apparently in better nervous health than for some years. Her decision to be divorced was deliberate and was made calmly with no attempt to blame her husband. From her point of view they had merely made a tremendous mistake from which divorce alone offered release. The case went to the court and they were divorced. They continued an intermittent correspondence and although they kept away from each other each followed the career of the other with sympathy and with interest.

After about three years of this separation the man became seriously sick from an infected finger. Upon learning of this his former wife obtained leave of absence from her school and went at once to the city where her former husband was ill in the hospital. She visited him daily and as soon as he had sufficiently recovered she cared for him during convalescence. Once again they felt drawn to each other by affection. Upon his recovery they married the second time. Some years subsequent they were still living happily together, both convinced that their wrong kind of honeymoon had spoiled the beginning of their marriage and brought them to their divorce.

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## CHAPTER XIV

### CONDITIONING OF SEX THROUGH CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCE

**The importance of early impressions.** The twentieth century, and especially the last decade, has witnessed an extensive and serious study of the child. The scientific investigator has worked from every angle and, without exaggerating the value of what has thus far been accomplished, it is not too much to say that our period is the first to have any precise and comprehensive understanding of infancy, childhood and youth. Undoubtedly greater headway has been made in interpreting the child than the adult. This is fortunate for practical purposes since the most impressive product of this scientific interest in the child is a clearer and more detailed realization of the significance of the years before maturity for the personality and conduct of the adult. Although we know less about the sex development of the child than, for example, we do concerning his physical growth, what has been discovered is in its consequences nothing less than revolutionary.

It is on the psychic side of sex that this new understanding has developed. New facts have been gathered in regard to the physiology of the child's sexual growth, but the contributions that have done most to change our thinking of the child's sex life have come from the greater insight we have regarding the emotional meaning of sex in childhood. Although this knowledge has come from many quarters, no one would hesitate to give Sigmund Freud the foremost place among the contributors to this enlarging idea of the significance of sex in childhood.

It is interesting to notice that much of this material which has led to a reconstruction of our thinking has come from the study of the conduct problems of the adult. It has appeared as a result of these investigations not only that sex has a wider and more subtle influence upon the adult than former thought assumed, but also that the sex career of the individual after maturity is intimately and causally related to the happenings in childhood. Psychiatric literature teems

with illustrations of this connection between childhood occurrences and adult character. The favorite term for expressing the influence of early experience upon that which comes later is *conditioning*. It is found that the child's sex life does not spontaneously move forward toward maturity according to development that unfolds from within, but rather that it is subjected to influences arising from the social environment; in other words, that it is conditioned.

And always it must be remembered that this sex conditioning of the individual ramifies outside its field of origin, spreading itself throughout the emotional life and expressing itself overtly in traits and attitudes far afield from sex. Moreover these connections are so often unrealized by the person as to justify their being called subterranean. The reactions that come forth from early conditioning of sex are highly emotional and this is explained, at least in great part, by the peculiar and hostile treatment sex receives almost from the first moment that it emerges so that the adult recognizes its appearance. This unfortunate reception from adults comes in turn from the emotional hurt that they received in their own sex development.

In spite of the evident improvement that is taking place in dealing with the sex life of the child, it is not surprising to one who realizes how far the parental program has been from the present teaching of science and how the practice of sex training still lingers behind the counsel of the specialist. It is still difficult to pass through childhood unscarred by conditioning processes which force upon sex and everything tied up with it in the thoughts of the child an emotional unsoundness which at some subsequent time may lead to emotional conflict in an adult form of sex adjustment. The complexities of these inner disturbances are so great that he who for the first time follows their interpretation in detail is apt to feel that sex is being exaggerated out of all proportion by being made a psychic scapegoat for every sort of mental trouble. As soon as one becomes familiar with the effects upon the emotional life of mystery, fear, guilt and artificial struggle occurring in the field of sex, this notion that sex is being enlarged beyond its legitimate proportions passes.

**Influence of early experience upon marriage.** In no experience in life do the unwholesome results of unwise conditioning of sex show so clearly as in marriage. How could it be otherwise when marriage is not only society's institution for establishing sex adjustment but also an intensely emotional relationship? Poisons gathered

up at an earlier period naturally discharge themselves in this mature expression of sex with its intimacy which is constantly challenging the integrity of personality. The sex flaws of earlier experience are bound to show themselves and if at all serious to become obstacles to happiness.

In comparison with marriage even friendship does not uncover so certainly the fundamental attitude, the emotional bedrock of the personality, and until sex is differently treated than it is by most parents at present, the basic emotions will seldom be unhurt by the sex career of childhood and youth.

Unfortunately, however, this is usually not understood by those who find themselves in the throes of marriage adjustment or who begin to feel a growing incompatibility. The marriage experience is most apt to be thought of as something detached from the rest of life, especially from events as distant as those of childhood. Even when there is no pronounced difficulty and matrimony continues to bring both husband and wife the satisfaction that they anticipated, there are likely to be unshared doubts or anxieties and uncertainty as to the meaning of the minor problems that arise in their fellowship, because their present interaction is in no degree thought of as connected with the formative period of childhood.

As a result of considering marriage a thing by itself, when trouble does arise it is regarded not as something historically tied up with the circumstances of childhood but as a spontaneous occurrence, betraying thoughts and feelings that represent the true desire and attitudes of the self. Since there is no appreciation of the distant roots of immediate reactions—and it matters not whether these are distinctly sexual reactions or whether they are emotional with a disguised sex origin—they are neither comprehended by the person experiencing them nor understood by the marriage partner. Instead of receiving sympathy as the products of earlier conditioning they are treated merely as faults.

Out of this come two opposite attitudes each of which proves dangerous for marriage happiness. One is the building up of a feeling of personal guilt, the development of an idea of being unworthy. In the effort to be rid of this cruel sense of failure every sort of mental and emotional contortion takes place. These derivatives of guilt feeling are themselves misinterpreted by both the self and the life partner so that a bad matter becomes worse. As psychoanalytic literature re-



veals, guilt feeling, however it originates, attacks the integration of the individual, but in no form is it more likely to be virulent than when it is flowing out of sex disturbance.

The opposite reaction which may be made in dealing with any difficulty of marriage, especially any sex problem, is to put the blame for its occurrence on the other member of the union. Then we have reversed the same unhappy circumstances that are associated with guilt feeling. Resentment replaces self-criticism; recrimination takes the place of the mental trickery by which the person suffering from a feeling of guilt attempts to get rid of his emotional burden. The unhappy individual insists upon charging the other with the responsibility for the matrimonial unrest or quarrels. This meets with protest so that those who were far apart at the beginning of their difficulty separate still further. Both the feeling of guilt and blame of the other person brings any problem of adjustment down to an emotional level where it cannot be handled rationally or with mutual sympathy. Energy that should be used to straighten out the difficulty is wasted in an emotional explosion.

Rarely do people who have married in good faith, when they find themselves in the midst of a matrimonial difficulty, treat their problem with indifference. Sex is, however, the one matter of mutual interest which is least likely to be treated with frankness. The complexities of maladjustment are also not generally recognized. The wife who has chronic headaches or who finds herself habitually open to irritation in her management of the household is not likely to suspect that the root of her trouble is sex dissatisfaction, although this may be the fact. The husband also who finds himself often and strangely despondent or much less expressive of affection within the domestic circle frequently does not realize that the cause of his changed mood is of a sexual origin.

Even when sexual maladjustment takes such a form as to lead one or both of the marriage partners to realize that sex is at the bottom of the difficulty, there is seldom any understanding of how far back in time may go its origin. Seldom is childhood explored with any appreciation of the part it plays in producing adult disturbance. If the case falls into the hands of the specialist he will trace back the difficulty until he gets to its beginning, if this is possible, but the great majority of those who find themselves under sex stress do not turn back for insight to very early experience, and, should they happen to

remember an occurrence of childhood that became a conditioning influence, they treat it lightly. As a consequence of this general failure to appreciate the sex significance of childhood, a sizable portion of the emotional conflicts that appear in marriage are struggled against without the discernment which their solution requires.

**Misinterpretation of sex dissatisfaction.** Any one emotionally disturbed searches for a means of settlement. He at least discovers a way of persuading himself what is the cause of the trouble and what is a promising solution. Since the individual in a matrimonial difficulty caused by unfortunate conditioning of sex in childhood seldom knows the cause of his predicament, he hits upon some explanation that is made to take the place of the true cause.

There are three common misinterpretations. The first results in the building up of resistance against sex itself, which is considered a mean element of human nature to be pushed outside personal desire. He who accepts this starts his footsteps on the road that leads toward asceticism. He attempts to solve sex incompatibility by removing sex from his personal experience. When this program is put in practice by the husband or wife, it becomes a direct attack against marriage itself.

### *Case 13*

The experience of C. E. illustrates the hopelessness of this method of trying to solve unhappiness in marriage based upon sex maladjustment. C. E. is a prominent and successful professional man, who for the past ten years has faithfully supported his wife and outwardly acted so that there is no public knowledge of the emotional separation of husband and wife. This he has done for the sake of his children. From the beginning of their married life the woman took the position that sex was a debasing experience, justified only for the purpose of bringing children into the world. After she had become the mother of two children she became unwilling to have more and insisted that sex should have no recognition in their association. The husband was strongly domestic and extremely fond of his children. Although tempted to satisfy his sex urges outside the home, he decided against this solution of his difficulty and gradually succeeded in destroying sex desire.

The ascetic program was carried through but with consequences that have embittered both husband and wife and separated them by an impassable gulf. They live together only for the children and because of the necessity for economic reasons of keeping outsiders from knowing the true state of affairs. In a limited sense each is a conscientious parent

to the children, but the tension and emotional divorcement of husband and wife make their effort to do well by the children futile. As the two sons grow older they become increasingly conscious of their miserable family life and are now beginning to show reactions outside the home which prophesy still more bitterness for both parents.

The husband suspects that his wife is the victim of early teachings regarding sex, her mother never having been happy in her marriage, but he has never succeeded in getting her to talk over her childhood. For a time E. did not realize the possibility of his wife's abnormal reaction coming out of childhood. Once he did, he made an attempt to break down the barrier and to get her to seek the assistance of a specialist. His suggestion merely led to a violent quarrel. It is interesting to know that although this wife is a prudent, faithful and efficient housekeeper, kind to her children and interested in their education, she shares at present no common interest with her husband except the maintenance of physical comfort in the home, and the education of the children. They will even go through a meal without speaking to each other. Evenings, the wife reads, sews and helps the children with their work while the husband in turn busies himself outside the home in all sorts of social enterprises in which he has become interested and through which he is doing genuine public service.

A second reaction is to blame the disturbance upon some sex fault in the other member of the union. This is a common result of sex incompatibility. Sometimes it is true that the trouble has originated from the behavior of the other, but frequently the complaining individual is himself or herself responsible. In either case when the difficulty actually goes back to some early conditioning influence, nothing is accomplished by throwing the blame upon the sex partner. Recrimination brings no insight but rather tends to increase tension and prevent solution of the problem.

The third reaction is equally unfortunate. In this case the individual considers himself born with deficient or excessive sex character. The former is of course nearly always the woman's reaction and the latter more often that of the man. The wife regards herself as inherently lacking in normal physical passion. She has no need of sex in her opinion, and finds the marital side of marriage an irksome duty or something that she cannot tolerate. She may find herself indifferent and believe that she lives on a higher plane than that of ordinary mortals, but often instead of taking pride in her peculiarity she regrets it exceedingly and struggles against her privation. Neither reaction helps her in digging down to the root of her difficulty. If

she has the good fortune to get psychiatric help, the origin of her unnatural reaction comes to light and seldom is it found unrelated to childhood experience.

However heroically a husband and wife undergoing sex strain may attempt to protect the child, they are never able to succeed. Even when there is no open quarreling the child, especially the very young child, is too sensitive to the atmosphere of the family not to detect that his father and mother are unhappy. When the rift between them is revealed, as so often it is, he is almost driven to taking sides. Whether he is saved from this or not, his family status is disturbed and his security broken. Frequently the dissatisfied wife becomes doubly harmful to the child. She clings to him as a refuge as she feels her affection for her husband slipping, and she also with or without deliberation begins to inject into his life ideas and attitudes which eventually will make more difficult his own sex adjustment. As a matter of fact, it is the daughter that is most apt to be injured because she can so readily take over fear of sex or hostility to marriage. In such a way the mother becomes a transmitter of morbid suggestion from her own childhood to that of her daughter.

The case of Caroline illustrates this.

#### *Case 14*

Caroline's father died when she was very young. She has no recollection of him, but a vivid picture of his character slowly developed from the statements of the mother. The mother was desperately unhappy in her marriage and apparently was most unwilling to accept the sex element of marriage. This she has not frankly confessed but in a series of denunciations of male passion does not leave the matter in doubt. The daughter was carefully brought up out in the open country so that the mother was able to dominate her life and to restrict her playmates and later her friendships. Nothing was left undone to make her suspicious of boys, and when she grew older to keep her from the thought of marriage. In order to accomplish this the mother interpreted the father in such a way that Caroline takes it for granted that her father was a man of low morals and disagreeable personality. There are no facts known to the community to justify this characterization. The child was bright and, as one would expect under the circumstances, somewhat precocious. When she entered high school she was the youngest of her class.

In order that the daughter might continue her education the mother had removed from the country to the neighboring village, that she might go on with her policy of guardianship. With considerable success her



mother restricted the association of the child so that she had slight contact with boys and no friendships with girls who were fond of boys. Throughout the high school period suggestions antagonistic to marriage were constantly given by the mother in more and more detail and with a frankness that the child at times found shocking.

Eventually the problem of college arose. For financial reasons and against her own desire the mother had to place the girl in the state university which was, of course, coeducational. During the first year no eventful thing happened and the girl continued the program to which she had been so long accustomed and gave almost exclusive attention to her studies. Every weekend she went home. In the middle of the sophomore year a crisis occurred. Caroline, who was attractive and fundamentally pleasure-loving in accord with her years, began to widen her acquaintances and gradually to include boys. For a time this remained a secret, but when the daughter wanted less and less to be at home during weekends the mother became suspicious, visited the campus, and discovered the truth. For a time it seemed as if the daughter would be withdrawn from college. Perhaps this was prevented by the influence of an instructor whom the daughter brought to her aid and who attempted frank discussion with the mother. The latter, reassured by finding that her daughter was strongly set against marriage, finally consented to Caroline's remaining at college. She desired Caroline to enter teaching, but the latter, growing more and more interested in science, obtained because of the excellency of her work a fellowship and in due time graduated from the university with its highest degree, prepared for college instruction. She obtained and accepted an appointment in another institution in the same state in spite of considerable opposition on the part of the mother, because it was now impossible for her to move away from her farm in the country to live with her daughter. After some years of teaching Caroline slowly developed interest in young men of her own age and class and finally to the consternation of her mother became engaged to marry.

The engagement was short, and after marriage the young man and his wife went to New York City where he continued teaching and she entered business as a scientific expert. Caroline through consultation was made conscious of the handicap she carried to marriage as a result of her mother's persistent adverse teaching. Prepared though she was to meet her danger, she did not escape, especially during the first three years, from trying circumstances. Unquestionably she recoiled, in spite of good intention, from the physical aspects of marriage. This attitude appeared intermittently and was associated with the fear that she was desired physically rather than truly loved. Thus she wrenched apart what she regarded as two different motives for marriage and regarded the former as

an enemy of the kind of affection she supremely desired. When she was in this mood she found herself inhibiting expressions of love. This in turn awakened suspicion of her in her husband. She determined to treat her problem rationally, and although at first she did not succeed always in carrying this out, her moments of protest against sex became less and less frequent and finally ceased to trouble her. By the fourth year her marriage was established on a mutually satisfying basis but at the cost of an emotional separation, at least on her part, from her mother whom she regarded as responsible for her ordeal. This also she keeps under control, proving her family loyalty by financial aid to her mother who has no inkling how difficult her instructions made Caroline's adjustment in marriage.

It is a very common thing for those who are in the midst of emotional discontent on account of bad conditioning of sex in childhood to seek relief by becoming interested in activities far removed from anything that savors of sex. This reaction appears constantly in psychoanalytic literature. If, as is quite often true, the activity assumed is one that clashes with sex, the zest with which it is followed seems all the greater. However useful such undertakings may be, they are unfortunate choices for getting rid of emotional conflict, since the cause of trouble is left undisturbed. There is also the opposite reaction under emotional stress, when the individual disturbed within the family goes outside and seeks escape in promiscuity rather than by getting rid of sex. This policy also leaves the cause of difficulty unchanged and a bad matter becomes worse.

**Naturalness of child's interest in sex.** There is, of course, nothing strange or unwholesome in the child's interest in sex. His curiosity here is no different from his general attitude toward his experiences. Everything that attracts his attention excites curiosity. It is through his eagerness to know the meaning of everything he perceives that he gains the mental growth necessary for his life adjustment. Under any circumstances sex would early attract him. He is interested in his own body and as soon as he distinguishes the existence of two groups of people, male and female, he is eager to know how they are different. Living as he does almost always even in this modern period under the shadow of a very ancient taboo of sex, his normal curiosity is heightened by the constant suggestion of mystery or self-consciousness he encounters whenever he asks questions that have to do with sex. He soon discovers that this is something differ-

ent from everything else in life and naturally he tries all the harder to pry out its meaning.

Even when he is helped by patient and understanding parents, he finds sex one of the most puzzling of his experiences. Ordinarily the help he is given either comes too late to be of the greatest value or is so expressed as to make him feel a constraint which gradually develops reticence on his part. In spite of the great progress that has been made in changing the attitude of parents regarding sex education, the most usual thing is for the child either to be left alone with his problem or to receive from his perplexed parent false explanation. Nothing but a miracle could bring the child who is indifferently or dishonestly answered in his seeking of information to a normal sex attitude. The consequence is that as the child matures here if not elsewhere there develops a great gulf between him and his parents, and as he approaches adolescence and sex extends its meaning, the separation becomes more and more significant, both for the parent and the child.

**Parents' purpose.** In the past, as is to a great extent still true, the parent who followed a conscious program in dealing with his child's sex curiosity had in mind protection. This effort to prevent the child from running into danger through his sex interests was carried out more vigorously in the case of a girl than of a boy. Suppression of sex was attempted and in so far as this was not accomplished inhibition and fear of sex were added. The present policy of the modern parent is in contrast to this. It aims to accomplish along lines of sex what is desirable in dealing with the rest of life—the ability to make wholesome adjustment.

**Parental policy in dealing with sex.** Among parents in this country at the present time who take any genuine interest in the sex problems of children, there are four common policies, two that continue from the past and two that have developed as a result of the more modern attitude. The first of these is to administer punishment. As soon as the child expresses any curiosity regarding sex, particularly if it takes any overt form which the parent notices, punishment is inflicted and the interest of the child is regarded both by him and by the parent as something evil. Neither fear of pain nor guilt feeling is able to keep sex out of the thought of the child. He believes that it is something bad from which he ought always to run away, but nevertheless in either a mild or a strong degree he finds himself fascinated.

If he be markedly conscientious he reports his failures to his parents, wishing to square himself by suffering penalty. The average child assumes the policy of apparent innocence and hides from the parent his vivid interest in sex which is expressed whenever any possibility of satisfaction happens to appear. Under such circumstances the sex training of the child is necessarily forced outside the home.

The second policy which is followed more frequently than the first is to give the child false teaching. Even when the parent does not deliberately lie but merely attempts to evade the question, the usual result is misunderstanding by the child. His curiosity cannot be left with a void. Some sort of idea has to grow up, for his interest cannot be left unsatisfied. As a rule the parent goes much farther than merely to shy away from the question the child presses upon him. He even falls back on conventional falsehoods such as "the baby is bought at the hospital" or "brought by the doctor." The child ceases his questioning and the parent is relieved that the crisis has been averted. As a matter of fact it has only been postponed, and sooner or later under less favorable circumstances the child must seek the truth which rarely can be had without his alienating himself from the parent who dealt with him so falsely.

In *Sex in Marriage* I refer to the protest that came from a family which was side-stepping its responsibility, when its deceptive instruction was invaded by another child who, learning that a baby had been born in the neighborhood, insisted upon correcting the erroneous ideas of her playmate. The later consequences of this parent's attitude were even more impressive than appears in the illustration. A part of the after-effects were necessarily left out to prevent identification.<sup>1</sup>

The third policy may best be described as that of sentimental or didactic teachings. In the first form the child's questions are answered with a mass of poetic illusions drawn primarily from plant life. The whole subject of sex is so sentimentally treated that the child is left confused and nearly as much deceived as to the real meaning of that in which he was interested as if he had been denied any information. Sex becomes a muddled sort of fairy tale utterly disconnected with the child's actual experiences. The child is left in the predicament of the boy living on the bank of the Mississippi, who did not know that the river he studied in his geography was the same

<sup>1</sup> *Sex in Marriage*, pp. 44-45.



one that he saw every day. In his classic criticism of this sentimental instruction Gavit tells the story of the child who had got something that she could grasp from an older friend who was cleaning roe fish, which revealed the emptiness of the previous instruction she had received, and expressed her relief by dashing off with "some inf'mation for Mother."<sup>2</sup>

Didactic explanation, however true to fact, is equally ineffective. What the child demands is not elaboration of detail or precision of statement, but simple facts that he can get hold of and bring into his system of thought. A favorite method of parents is to procure some book written for the child which is supposed to contain the information he desires, but what he seeks is not an encyclopedia adapted to his age but an interpreter. By the time he is able to read for himself he has passed beyond the most important period for wholesome conditioning of sex. Moreover his questions are not general but specific. They need answering when first they appear and then they are in simple form.

It is not true, however, that the giving of instruction at any period, however skillfully it is done, is likely to satisfy the curiosity permanently. Interest comes back again from time to time and wants, whenever it arises, fresh interpretation. The only satisfactory way of dealing with the child's problem is to give him early, before he is self-conscious and as often as he needs it, simple, direct, and honest interpretation. He does not just want to know facts but to get at the same time some inkling as to the attitude of the parent. Especially is this true as soon as he runs into conventional attitudes toward sex in his contact with playmates outside the home. He wishes clear answers to his puzzle but he also seeks the social security given him by the understanding parent. The moment he encounters expressions of shame or hostility toward sex, no book or lecture can accomplish much. It is, in normal cases, the parent whom he trusts most and with whom he feels most secure. Therefore to the parent he comes, not once but repeatedly, for assistance regarding sex in the same way that he asks for help in dealing with his other problems and perplexities.

**The ignorance of children.** It is almost unbelievable how ignorant most children are of sex. Never having received clear informa-

<sup>2</sup> J. P. Gavit, "Some Inf'mation for Mother," *Journal of Social Hygiene*, Vol. XII, No. 4, pp. 193-201.

tion, they try to pool together such inconsistent remarks or occasional statements as they happen to come across. Their ignorance continues not only through adolescence but in many instances even into marriage. To the sophisticated person this seems almost unbelievable, but it is not so strange when it is remembered that from no one have they received definite or trustworthy instruction.

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## CHAPTER XV

### SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF SEX ATTITUDES

**Sex attitudes and marriage.** Marriage as a relationship is many-sided and cannot be interpreted by concentration upon any one of its various elements. When, however, we attempt to discover the ways in which social influences act upon the marriage experience in contemporary American life attention passes first to sex. This is not because there is a disposition among those who study marriage to stress in any narrow fashion the physical side of marriage; it merely registers the discovery that is made by any one who becomes interested in the adjustments of marriage, that sex is particularly liable to an adverse social conditioning, thus becoming for most couples not only the first but usually also the supreme test of their relationship.

Sex for the modern adult is certainly no flowing out of an instinct which merely requires adaptation to circumstances for the building of a harmonious union. On the contrary, the social background of the individual as it has acted upon his life from childhood has superimposed upon the original and imperative physical urge an elaboration of feeling, thinking, and activity which is rarely consistent within itself and seldom in full accord with the corresponding traits in the marriage partner.

From the first it is common for both the husband and wife to find themselves attempting a double adjustment in the attempt to adapt to the needs of each other and at the same time to the sex attitudes built in themselves by their past. It is because of this that a successful entrance upon marriage for the modern man and woman cannot be achieved by the mere bringing to the relationship of sophistication and skilled technique. Successful sex adjustment considered in a narrow and strict sense can never be on its own level. When we seek to extract the sex element from a matrimonial incompatibility, even when the difficulty seems to be distinctly sexual, we soon find ourselves bringing to the surface not a single root like that of the tuberous vegetable but rather a matted entanglement similar to that of the fibrous witch grass. This fact has such practical importance that

a thoroughgoing discussion of marriage cannot avoid attention to the social background of sex.

**Sex a social problem.** Investigation soon discloses that there is nothing peculiar about sex that makes it particularly susceptible to social influences in a way that would not be true of the other aspects of marriage if they had similar treatment, but rather that no feature of human nature is so early, so constantly, and so inconsistently coerced by social pressure as is sex. The situation in which the sexually maturing individual finds himself is not one that can be easily changed by eliminating or ignoring conventions. It is true that more wholesome social standards in regard to sex make the individual's adjustment easier than when he has been subjected to prudish and ascetic conventions. It is also true that in the process of making adjustment the man or woman is frequently forced to reconstruct former attitudes toward sex. In spite of these facts the solution of the conditioning of sex cannot be accomplished for many individuals by turning away from early impressions or by refusing to recognize existing conventions. There is need instead of thoroughgoing reconstruction and the changing of attitude by re-education.

There is no evidence that even if society were willing to treat indifferently the sex development of the child, occasion would never arise for the reforming of attitudes. However artificial a great part of the problem may be, as a result of the social pressure characteristic of highly developed culture, there is an inherent element that in any case would lead to some disturbance. As a consequence of the distinction which is enforced by biological differences between the sex life of the child and that of the adult, the child and the adult look at sex from opposite positions. In spite of the former's attempt to anticipate what he knows or what he thinks he knows regarding mature sex experience in his play, he must remain outside, and this in itself apart from the attitude of the adult creates a sense of mystery and stimulates fancy.

On the other hand the adult, in his desire to save the child from what he conceives of as an unfortunate development of sex, is likely to attempt a policy of protection which all too easily becomes merely negative, an effort to restrain what he considers evidence of dangerous precocity in the child. This explains the social coercion of sex which appears now as universal in all groups, although usually less exacting among the simpler peoples. This contrast of the child and the adult,



the one seeking to pry into a mystery which aside from any social convention is denied him by his incomplete biological structure, and the other attempting in some degree to restrict if not to suppress the child's ever-growing curiosity, adds to the stress so commonly associated with puberty. This comprises the period of transition during which the child moves into some understanding of the adult experience and the latter in turn finds himself forced to recognize that the child is graduating from the suppression which both nature and society have imposed.

In this divorcement of the experience of adult and child there is opportunity for a great variation in the form and the amount of separation. Puritanism, for example, multiplied the natural difficulties of the child's growth many fold, just as at the same time it so perverted the meaning of sex for the adult as to cause, at least in the conscientious, a fear of sex which was reflected in unwholesome coercion of the child.

**The necessity of coercion.** There is, of course, no incompatibility between sex and civilization for the former is indispensable to the survival of the latter. But it is true that as culture advances in complexity, values are developed and recognized that lead to restraint of sex. This appears as a conflict of ethical and social incentives as against the biological and individual impulses. It is important to notice that this clash is not exclusively along lines of sex, for self-assertion in all its forms leads to a similar struggle of the egoistic against group values.

Restraint in both instances comes from social and moral motives, because uncurbed individualism cannot be tolerated. Society for its own preservation has to modify egoistic expression, for a community life in which each person is a law unto himself would be no less than a perpetual battlefield, each person in constant struggle to tyrannize over all the others.

The fact that society cannot escape the building of some sort of sex restraint does not, of course, prove that the conventions existing at any time or place are wholesome, but it does bring out the necessity of some sort of conditioning of the growing child in his sex life. In any attempt to understand how the social background helps or hinders married happiness, it is of the utmost importance to recognize that every person's sex career is an individual training in which there are from the beginning two different sets of incentives, the egoistic

and the social, which easily develop conflict so that sex integration of the self may never be accomplished, and as a consequence sex adjustment to some one else cannot be had. Lacking a consistent attitude toward sex itself, the individual is unable to achieve sex happiness in fellowship with husband or with wife.

There are, of course, great differences in the form and the amount of restraint put upon the child both by groups of different cultural levels and by individuals who share the same social background. There are also variations among individual children in their consciousness of restriction and in the effect that it has upon them. In recent years progress has been made in the development of a sounder policy in our own society and there are many parents who deal with their children with understanding and frankness. It is rare, however, for the child's advancing curiosity to encounter in his father and mother no degree of reticence, so that at some point the child encounters from his social environment restraint similar to that established by his physical immaturity.

Occasionally the public official or social worker comes across children who have been treated differently and who have at an early age been ushered into some form of sexual precocity through association with defective, perverted or vicious adults, or because of the lack of privacy found among the overcrowded families of the very poor. In such instances the child either recoils from sex through disgust or reaches toward the adult experience even more than do children who encounter restraint. When the experience has included some form of personal sex activity the physical development is also apt to suffer harm.

**The socializing of sex interest.** Considered as a process of growth, the development of sex is not essentially different from the advance toward maturity along other lines. Its peculiarity comes from the special treatment it receives. From every quarter the individual encounters conditioning influences of which he becomes conscious as a limiting or blocking of egoistic desire, but in the field of sex the collision between the child who covets complete knowledge of the adult's secret and the adult who endeavors to restrict the child's ever-growing curiosity provides the condition for excessive emotional reaction. The child, for example, who is made to feel that his desire to advance his knowledge along this particular line of experience is disloyal to his parents is driven early into two opposing cravings,

neither of which can be satisfied or thrown aside. Thus an ambivalency is forced upon the child and at times so thoroughly established that it becomes a permanent characteristic of his or her sex life, a detrimental influence, either preventing marriage or, when it occurs, making sex adjustment difficult.

This conflict that is forced upon the child by making him feel that his desire to satisfy sex curiosity is treason to his affection to his family throws light upon one of the common dangers in the relationship of parent and child. The child who resists as best he can a genuine desire for sex knowledge finds need of strengthening his effort and this he accomplishes best by clinging closer to the parent. It has commonly happened that the latter responds with increased expression of love, and conditions are provided for the fixation of which we hear so much in the literature of child study. The contact with the parent is made a substitute for the personal growth the child would normally make in his sex development. This suppression of curiosity by closer clinging to the parent is not the whole story of what happens. The craving for sex advice is not smothered out but enters in a subterranean way into the relationship between the parent and child so that what seem to be closer ties of affection are actually in greater or less degree distinctly sexual, that is, the sex urge finds satisfaction under the guise of affection.

Thus it becomes clear why this parental fixation makes the later adjustment of marriage difficult. Sex has been turned out of its normal channel and associated with an emotional dependency, first upon the parent and at a later time by transference upon the husband or the wife. The victim of parental fixation, robbed of an independent normal sex life, seeks refuge in a fixation which so long as it continues antagonizes sex relationship. There issues from this the paradoxical effort, once transference has been made to husband or wife, to maintain the closest possible affection while in the meantime looking upon the intrusion of sex as something alien and hostile to love.

A second mishap which may come out of the interference of the adult leads to trouble in a different direction. When the child is rebuked or punished, ridiculed or deceived, instead of turning to the parent in the effort to lessen his struggle for sex information, he attempts to escape from his curiosity by looking upon it as something intrinsically evil. This attitude is not strange, it is so often suggested by the word and the expression of the parent. The child builds his

defense by creating disgust or a feeling of shame. His sex easily becomes his chief moral enemy and evil interest against which he must always be on guard. The greater the conflict, the more necessary it is for him to debase the source of his trouble. Seldom does he work at this without assistance from older people. The conditioning is severe and emotionally penetrating. Not realizing that his curiosity is inevitable and in no sense distinct from the searching that he carries on along his other lines of growth, he suffers in proportion to his moral sensitiveness because he cannot root out the evil line of thought and the degrading imagination that are stimulated by the policy of suppression.

The outcome of much conditioning of this character leads eventually to the building of a solid guilt feeling in regard to all things sexual, which of course brings a renewal of conflict as soon as marriage occurs and its physical adjustment problems arise. This climax of maladjustment to life, serious as it is for the newly married, is not the only way in which guilt feeling perverts sex. Even those who remain single do not escape the torture of inner conflict. However high they build their defense, sex in some form is bound to intrude time and again, and with it come humiliation and a feeling of moral unsoundness. This guilt recoil against sex curiosity is so common that any one who knows the intimate life of his associates is acquainted with it, and the specialists who deal with problem children find it a prolific root of various kinds of maladjustment.

In that extraordinarily intimate and pathetic diary of which Freud said, "Never before I believe has anything been written enabling us to see so clearly the inner soul of a young girl belonging to our social and cultural stratum during the years of puberal development," appears an illuminating instance of intense guilt reaction.<sup>1</sup> At the age of twelve the diarist tells how a girl playmate has instructed her as to how children come. She still finds the matter vague but has been told enough to give her a fearsome attitude toward the experience that she symbolizes by the term *that*. Now she understands *that* is the original sin, the same act of Adam and Eve that spoiled the career of man. She is so upset by what she has heard that the next day she records that it seems as if she had always been seeing *that*.

<sup>1</sup> *A Young Girl's Diary*, translated by Eden and Cedar Paul. The book also illustrates fear, p. 34, punishment, p. 35, shame, p. 45, and other instances of conflict throughout the record.



She is beset with conflict and now protests against the idea, which has become associated with her father. The next year the struggle reaches a climax. Her mother has died of cancer. Her sister insists that this is a sign of God's displeasure against the father for his association with *that* and also because of the wickedness of the children in seeking to learn about *that* or in keeping their thoughts hidden from the mother. The child expresses her terrible fear which makes her unwilling to go into a dark room because she always feels that some one is looking at her and ready to seize her for her evil thinking.

In spite of her horror we find her a few weeks later again in trouble because she has tried to enlighten another friend and the head mistress in rebuking her refers to the recent death of her mother, pronouncing her behavior corrupt and shameful. Nevertheless the curiosity is irresistible and the next month she naïvely states that "after all one cannot help one's thoughts," while determining to be more prudent in rehearsing them to associates who cannot be expected to keep a secret. In this intimate revelation of the child's experiences we can trace in detail the atrocious conditioning of the normal quest of an inquiring child, isolated in her struggle even though her parents are sympathetic and conscientious.

The unfortunate conditioning processes carried on by the adult give another unwholesome twist to the child seeking for sex insight. Instead of affection being used to block the quest or the notion of evil being built up, stress is put upon the dangers of sex and a fear concerning it is established. This also we find in the diary of the German child, for one of the first impressions she gets from sex is that it is associated with suffering, especially for the woman. There are two favorite topics for those who try to instill fear of sex as a means of protecting children and restraining their curiosity. One is pregnancy and the other, venereal disease. It is almost unbelievable to the sophisticated adult how intense may be the dread of becoming pregnant in a young girl who has the most vague idea as to how she runs into danger. This also is illustrated in the young girl's diary<sup>2</sup> when her boy playmate who had been tickling her under the arms and on the hands to make her laugh reassures her that she is running no risk. A little later she has the notion that people get pregnant by being infected in a way similar to that of catching a disease.

<sup>2</sup> *A Young Girl's Diary*, p. 34.

Any one who has been made a confidant so that he has first-hand knowledge of the girl's fear of unsought pregnancy knows the fantastic forms this dread can take. It comes from the warning unaccompanied by explanation, given by parents, especially mothers. A similar process goes on in regard to venereal disease. Fear is purposely invoked but rarely is any honest effort made to give the child the clear understanding that alone permits intelligent protection.

Fear of childbearing is another type of fear that gets associated with sex. This is not so often the result of deliberate intent on the part of the parent, but comes about accidentally. It is a fortunate child who grows up without having any introduction to individual cases of suffering during labor, death from childbirth, or expression of dread by women who face a birth ordeal. On a sensitive child, particularly, of course, a girl, such experiences tend to build up a fear which is sooner or later associated with sex as the responsible cause of the trouble. Once the fear is strongly established it is not easily eradicated, even though at a later time the individual comes to have a more intelligent attitude toward these various experiences. Childbearing is dreaded and this fear prevents abandonment to the sex act of marriage even when it does not lead to persistent hostility. The taboo, once constructed, cannot be removed by the mere expedient of a marriage ceremony or even under the stimulation of strong affection.

There is a form of bad conditioning of the child's sex curiosity which is not so common as the others and for which the parent is not so often the person responsible. It is tied up with a feeling of disgust for anything pertaining to sex. It is more likely to come from a sudden shock or some accidental misinterpretation than because of conscious effort on the part of the adult to restrain the child's sex interest. Indeed, the contrary is often true. It comes about usually by the deliberate attempt of some perverted or sadistic adult to get a peculiar satisfaction by hurting the child's sensibilities. It is best described as a sort of psychic rape which befalls the child on account of the failure of the parents' protection rather than as a consequence of protection. Although different in its origin, it must be catalogued among the forms of bad social conditioning since it is apt to have a harmful effect upon the sexual development of the child.

It is true that even experiences of this character which go so far as to include physical injury are often made emotionally serious in the life of the victim because of the unwise reaction of the parent.

Dangerous as is the experience in itself, it is made more so by the intensity of the parent's reaction to it. The child responds to the suggestion of the parent who loses all sense of proportion and self-control and reads into what has happened greater significance than it has for the child. Thus again we see evidence of a conditioning process that comes forth from the fundamental policy of sex restraint. The occurrence is looked upon as something that has demolished the defenses that the parent had so long been attempting to construct. It is assumed that this has led to a tremendous injury which necessarily must forever mar the life of the child. By this parental attitude, in addition to the injury of the experience itself, the child is desperately hurt. He at least carries through life a mutilation in his sex development that makes his adjustment difficult if not impossible.

In order fully to appreciate the meaning of this conditioning process, we must keep in mind that the child's curiosity is a double-rooted impulse coming forth from a maturing body and also from a growing mind. The conditioning process on the other hand also has a double source. In part it reflects the general social consciousness and in part it issues from the sex life of the adult who himself has been conditioned from his own childhood by the very same processes which are now working for good or ill upon the developing child.

**Social values involved.** Human history reveals that man has never taken his sex life lightly. The codes of primitive people are no exception to this, although they have in times past been falsely interpreted by travelers and missionaries who misunderstood them. The reason why man has found it difficult to take an indifferent attitude toward sex behavior is, of course, because it has had genuine social significance that could not be ignored. This fact is sometimes so stated as to seem a conflict between sex and civilization. This is a mere surface observation that does not fairly bring out the meaning of the taboos, restrictions and moral standards that have been established.

It is not that civilization antagonizes sex but rather that for its own preservation it must attempt the socializing of this side of human nature just as certainly as it has to deal with other individual impulses. There appears to have been, as far back as we can trace human experience, the addition of a sense of mystic potency connected with sex which pays tribute to the attention it forces upon the consciousness of even simpler people. Its grip upon the imagination, even

when it was in no way connected with the greater mystery of reproduction, had the strength of an impulse suggestive of an instinct. Its periodic appearance and departure, its leading to a peculiar companionship, tended to mark it off from other experiences and put upon it an element of strangeness. As soon as growth of understanding tied it with the conceiving of life, it furnished still greater incentive toward mysticism. Once its idealization became conscious it flowered into romanticism. Clearly, social evolution has not had a smothering influence upon sex but, on the contrary, has widened its meaning and given greater and greater importance to sex as a human experience.

To be sure, sex, thought of as a physical activity, has felt the impact of civilization, but that only means that the man and woman in every stage of society have not been able to remain mere animals in this portion of their life any more than in their other interests and activities. This evolution is not altogether due to the necessity of restricting individual impulses for the common good, it is rather that man as he develops so enlarges the meaning of sex for himself that he cannot keep it devoid of the choices, the restrictions, and the personal values that constitute the psychic addition that he has put upon it as he has advanced his culture.

Obviously sex cannot have the meaning it now has without becoming the source of possible strain and maladjustment, a part of human life that requires socialization just as does pugnacity or acquisitiveness. Progressive culture as it creates a new and more complex and meaningful environment produces the conditioning influences that the individual responds to as he builds up his own sex character. In so far as any group of people divide into distinct classes, we find corresponding differences in the conditioning processes that operate. In our own time we can distinguish, if we do not attempt to draw the line too sharply, three social strata which may be roughly termed in an economic sense, the highest, the middle, and the lowest classes, and in so far as the members of these various divisions are characteristic in their life philosophy, we can detect differences in the sex norm that dominates their conduct and their thinking. Where the separation is water tight and there is little movement back and forth from class to class, the variation is more pronounced than in a society as fluid as our own.

Personal adjustment between individual desire and social standards,



which at first seems to many individuals a collision of interests and to those unhappily mated a conflict, is designated sublimation. The word is fruitful in its suggestion because it calls attention to the amount of value that society at present extracts from what was once a mere physical urge. It is possible to draw from sex, as unquestionably civilization does, what may be likened to energy which can be turned to religion, art, affection, love of achievement, and even growth in self-discipline and moral responsibility. Society profits, but so does the individual who safely passes the neurotic and emotional hazards ever present in the socialization of the individual.

**Good conditioning.** The fact that society cannot avoid conditioning the individual sex life does not in itself justify any particular taboo, coercion or code that happens to have been established. If this were true, at one point human nature could not be expected to make any advance toward the more intelligent and useful handling of one of its major problems. Undoubtedly social thought at times has taken an attitude toward sex which can best be described as panic. The strength of individual impulse has been exaggerated and decried, and an ideal of asceticism has been set up, which, although it necessarily failed to govern the conduct of many, has created unnecessary conflict which in turn has hampered sex adjustment and the moral soundness of the individual.

In many instances asceticism has found its advocates in those who, having a special difficulty in their own sex adjustment, later turned against the sex aspect of human experience with all the ferociousness and morbidity that can flow out of the feeling of guilt. The roots of their emotion may lie either in early conduct or in the fictitious struggle produced by unwholesome conditioning. It matters not. Their violent experience, whether expressed in conduct they later repudiate, or in a struggle between feeling and thinking, may lead to a reaction equally extreme, and if, as has often happened, they are persons of persuasiveness or with qualities that lead to power, they use their authority to build in others false attitudes toward sex. The asceticism of some of the early Christian church leaders, of Calvinism, and of Puritanism, so distorted sex as to magnify it while at the same time forcing upon the multitude a fictitious and unwholesome moral struggle.

As science learns more about human sex experience and its effect upon personality, it becomes clearer that the social standards which

regulate conduct will have to go to the bar of intellectual judgment instead of gathering their authority from tradition or emotion. To wish it otherwise would be to surrender confidence in the growth of human understanding and in the ability of men and women to deal rationally with their problems. In any case, development of rational judgment at this point can be prevented only by finding a way to keep sex outside the field of science. The most an obstructionist can accomplish is a slowing up of progress in the building of rational social conditioning processes so as to bring about a dangerous social lag.

**Inadequacy of sex preparation.** Nothing in modern life is so startling as the general inadequacy in every part of our education in dealing with the problem of socializing sex. The school, the family, the church, the law and the press still hold an indifferent or a negative attitude toward sex education. The individual as he stretches toward enlightenment is neglected by adults and must gain his knowledge by accidental prying out of such information as he can get from those in his own age group who seem luckier than himself in gaining knowledge or from adults who have a perverted craving to entice others to their own practices or ideas. Even though considerable progress has been made in recent years, it is still generally true that the growing boy and girl get from no quarter substantial help in the maturing of sex life, and as a consequence their development brings unnecessary conflict and hazard.

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## CHAPTER XVI

### HETEROSEXUALITY

**The achievement of heterosexuality.** Heterosexuality represents the achievement of normal sex maturity. Its meaning, however, is frequently restricted through misunderstanding so that it seems to represent merely the attainment of a passion for a member of the opposite sex. Such a conception describes the experiences only of those whose sex life keeps to the lowest levels or who, after achieving maturity, retreat to a primitive type of sex as a result of senile decay. If heterosexuality is to be thought of as the goal of the individual's development in his responsiveness to a member of the opposite sex rather than to some one of the same sex, the element of personal selection which is characteristic of the matured human being must be included. Heterosexuality is not attained by the person who is always in a state of erotic fever, responding without discrimination to any one of the opposite sex, nor is it reached by those whose sex life so lingers on the plane of simple physical appetite as to have no need of personal emotional response from the man or woman chosen for sex partnership. Heterosexuality means a growth in the feeling of preference and in the demands for response in any attraction that carries one outside his own sex type.

The changes that accompany the strictly physical maturing of sex are precise and relatively limited. Once the structure reaches its full growth, there is slight possibility of further adaptation. On the contrary, on its psychic side the growth of sex life is not automatically determined nor is its progress confined within rigid barriers. As a consequence of this difference between the physical and the psychic sex life, heterosexual maturity has to proceed chiefly along the second line of advance, and it is during the process of psychic growth that opportunity arises for the influence of the social environment to draw the individual out of the normal line of advance.

There are, as we have known for a long time, a small group of individuals who appear to be born with a biological twist which starts their sex growth in the opposite direction from that which is usual



and normal. The instinctively homosexual attempt to achieve maturity in their sex life just as do the more fortunate men and women who are heterosexually inclined. But the former, since their entire social environment is characteristically adjusted to the opposite impulses, meet with constant social protest and feel themselves emotionally ostracized.

Since the expansion of sex, its humanizing, is made possible by the refinement and the extension of the psychic qualities that are tied in alliance with the physical, the operation of conditioning influences from the social environment is chiefly confined within the mental field of sex. Not only does this provide for differences among individuals in their achievement of heterosexual maturity, it also makes each person liable to some distortion or perversion of sex which will remove him from the group to which he belongs and place him in the company of those who are homosexually inclined. The importance of such a mishap will depend upon the time when it occurs in the development of the individual and upon the emotional character of this departure from orthodox sex desire.

In this chapter we shall be concerned with the environmental influences that hamper the attainment of heterosexuality and its full development. In our effort to understand how it is that some men and women fail to mature and others are turned away from what would have been their characteristic response to heterosexual attraction we must keep in mind the discussion of the previous chapter. Since the same emotional conditioning processes are concerned, there is no need of retracing our footsteps, but as we deal with the goal of mature sex achievement we shall need to remember that the problems to be analyzed are bound up with the guilt feeling, or shame, or fear, or recoil from social coercion which has previously been described. As the former chapter dealt with the processes and the products of bad conditioning, so now we need to turn to the occasions that lead to a special form of emotional conflict. Again we must start with early childhood and trace sex development, but from a different angle of interest, so as to discover the sorts of experience which have had a determining influence on the growth of the heterosexual impulse.

**The homosexual hazard.** Homosexuality must not be thought of as something recently developed as a result of modern social conditions. It is probably at least as old as the human race itself. Even

among animals we find that it sometimes occurs when the members of one sex are isolated from those of the opposite sex. Investigation reveals two lines of causation, the biological and the social.<sup>1</sup> In this discussion it is the social or psychoanalytic, as it is also termed, that concerns us.

In an understanding of the homosexual hazard, it must be remembered that the possibility of developing along either of these contrasting sex interests is potentially present, at least in most individuals, from the beginning. This has been well said by Stekel as follows: "I am of the opinion that all persons are bisexual. The disposition toward homosexuality exists in every one; the homosexual represses his heterosexuality; the heterosexual his homosexuality. I further maintain that the homosexual component remains in everybody, but it depends upon the patient if he will indulge in it."<sup>2</sup>

One must not suppose that all homosexuality is expressed in physical sex perversion. Homosexuality takes various forms. It may exist as a conscious or unconscious craving. Even when conscious it may remain purely psychic and never obtain any kind of physical expression. These psychic desires, depending upon their degree of repression, cause little or great difficulty in the life of an individual.<sup>3</sup> Unless these variations in adult homosexuality are recognized one misinterprets the meaning of the statements of specialists that homosexuality is more common than is generally supposed and since the World War has in its morbid form been increasing.<sup>4</sup>

**Heterosexuality and childhood.** Again we are concerned with the effects of childhood upon the sex maturing of the individual, but from a different viewpoint than formerly. Our effort now is to discover the special pitfalls that hamper or prevent the achievement of heterosexual maturity. Freud's analysis of childhood experience helps us, but we must beware of too rigid an interpretation. The child as we meet him at birth and during the first years of infancy is only potentially human. He has not acquired a personality nor can

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Phyllis Blanchard's chapter, "Homosexuality, Ancient and Modern," in the symposium, *This Neurotic Age*.

<sup>2</sup> Wilhelm Stekel, "Is Homosexuality Curable?" *The Psychoanalytic Review*, Vol. XVII, No. 4, pp. 444-445.

<sup>3</sup> C. P. Oberndorf, "Diverse Forms of Homosexuality," *The Urologic and Cutaneous Review*, August, 1929, p. 523.

<sup>4</sup> J. F. W. Meagher, "Homosexuality: Its Psychobiological and Psychopathological Significance," *The Urologic and Cutaneous Review*, August, 1929, p. 505.

he be thought of from a psychological point of view as even an individual. His organism is indeed receiving impressions from within and without that are contributing to a psychic growth which, though feeble at first, soon will go forward rapidly and with great effectiveness. The stimulations which come from the outside are reported as sensations of the child's own body, primarily through tactual contact with things and with the mother. At the beginning these two are not distinguishable by the infant, but as his mental life advances there comes about a gradual recognition of difference. This first stage Freud describes as auto-erotism, meaning by this the faint beginnings of the love life which are tied up with a hazy, undiscriminated mass of stimulus and response experiences.

As soon as the infant reaches the ability to detect differences between himself and the non-self world, he finds in the mother or the adult who has furnished him with comfort and with pleasure a peculiar meaning not found elsewhere in the non-self world. The distinction between himself and his mother he slowly discovers, but even when he arrives thus far in his development he still identifies himself with her so that she becomes supremely the object of his love. As his growth continues the circle of significant objects of love enlarges. Usually this means that his love life includes the various members of the family with whom he has familiar contact. He has now embarked upon the socializing adventure which is destined so greatly to shape his personality.

At once there arises an important influence that comes from the fact that the parent of the opposite sex is likely to give the boy or girl an expression of love of greater warmth and abandonment than the other parent. For the boy this means that he is liable to linger longer than he should in a relationship with the mother that suggests the earlier period of auto-eroticism. For the girl, on the other hand, it offers opportunity to transfer early to the father the intensity of her original love experience with the mother. The child is quick to recognize and to respond to this larger expression of affection. Thus from the family association comes encouragement in the development of heterosexual attitudes.

It will, however, not be necessarily true that he will be given the greater show of affection from the parent of opposite sex and as a consequence the family setting may provide conditions that obstruct rather than mature the development of heterosexual impulses. The

girl appears to run greater danger of this happening because, starting as she does in the usual case with greater attachment to the mother than to the father, if the other parent fails to become a competitor of the mother's love, she is left in her affection with the feeling of special closeness to a member of the same sex. As a consequence of this and other influences that operate at a later time, she is more apt to be led into failure to achieve heterosexuality because of the concentration of her love impulses, first on the mother and later on some other individual of the same sex as herself.

This dramatic interaction of the child and the parent is not the only eventful influence in the development of the former's sexual maturity. From another quarter come influences that need to be considered by themselves even though they also form a part of the total setting of the family. When the child reaches the consciousness of various sorts of experiences which the parent looks upon as related to sex, a new element emerges which also makes its impression on the growing character. The child, for example, discovers that he can by playing with his own body obtain pleasurable sensations while on the other hand he finds out that his conduct is frowned upon by the parent if the latter recognizes what is happening. Likewise a similar experience at a later stage of development reveals again the hostility of the parent to what to the child is no different from other activities. Perhaps the play of home-keeping including the child's idea of the rôles of father and mother, carried out in a more realistic manner than the parent who discovers it approves, leads to punishment or to sharp rebuke. In both cases what should be regarded as play rather than as anything seriously connected with sex is magnified by the reception it gets until it gathers sex flavor and becomes related to the special line of interest which is so vague and fascinating to many children for reasons described in an earlier chapter.

It is misleading to use the word masturbation as we still commonly do for the sex play that occurs in this earlier period of childhood. It is true that this play does continue sometimes in a more or less unbroken fashion until eventually it appears at puberty in a form that justifies the term. In any case it must be distinguished from the type of conduct so frequently found in the early part of adolescence. The severe treatment that the average child receives from adults when he is caught in what is assumed to be sex conduct leads to an emphasis of the very thing from which the adult is attempting to protect the child.



His increased interest he must keep to himself or at least hide from those who punish or criticize him. Thus he is thrown back for his enlightenment upon his play associates, especially those older and more sophisticated than himself. As one would expect, this is more apt to be a member of his own than of the opposite sex and the very fact that the two children share a secret of a sex character opens the way for an intimacy which carries impulses toward homosexual tendencies rather than toward the opposite. It would be unfortunate to exaggerate this trend by insisting that this is always true. Even when in this grouping of boys with boys and of girls with girls the experiences are clearly homosexual, they are frequently mere substitutes for the stronger interest, which is along lines of normal attraction. There can be, however, no gainsaying the fact that this shutting up of the child by the adult's excessive reaction to what is rarely as serious as it seems adds somewhat to the burden that the sensitive, highly imaginative child carries as he moves forward to the achievement of wholesome or unsound sex character.

There is need in interpreting this experience of sex play to keep in mind the unhappy effects that come to the child who is exploited by older persons and forced into some form of precocity by being made familiar with adult sex experience. As we shall soon see, this, by alienating the child, when he dares not reveal the occurrence to the parents, who are closest in love and fellowship, creates a barrier which easily brings forth genuine masturbation with its associated shame and fear. This can be best interpreted in its clearer expression at puberty, but the consequences of the earlier childhood experience may be exactly similar to those that come more often at the later time.

**Heterosexuality and puberty.** The sex problems of puberty are commonly regarded as more serious than those that arise during childhood. This comes from the fact that in the later period sex takes a clearer form and an expression more closely related to that familiar to the adult. It would be going too far to insist that no sex difficulties ever originate at the time of puberty, but without doubt most of the difficulties that do arise are the fruitage of earlier misfortune. Certainly the child that has had a wholesome sex development preceding puberty is best prepared to meet the stress that so frequently accompanies the change of physical structure and the beginning of adult sex life. Whatever mishap has occurred in the earlier years, by antagoniz-

ing the maturing process, makes the individual liable to further trouble as he passes through the testing of pubescent changes.

From the days of infancy there has been a widening of emotion accompanying growth. In this expansion the part that concerns us centers about the love life in which the heterosexual impulse has a prominent place. If normal development has occurred the individual has taken much of his emotional life outside the family so that the drama in which he begins to play has a much larger cast. Both the boy and girl are also conscious that in the interrelations that lie so largely outside the family a new and extraordinarily strong interest in members of the other sex has taken possession of them and has greatly changed their outlook upon life. This, which they rarely attempt to analyze, but of which they are distinctly conscious, bears testimony that they have attained the heterosexual drive which normally belongs to their stage of development.

It is here, however, that we detect one of the common aberrations which reveals that things have not gone so well as one would wish. Instead of awakening to heterosexual attraction the boy or girl clings to the parent's love and allows entrance to no rival emotion. Usually this parental fixation has been going on through childhood and now shows itself in its most dangerous form. Even the parent who has encouraged this dependency throughout childhood may be surprised and terribly worried when he finds that his child is not showing the interest in members of the opposite sex which should be expected.

It has long been recognized that masturbation commonly appears during puberty. There was a time when this was considered seldom true of the girl, but investigation is beginning to show that there is no marked difference between the two sexes except that the boy's problem is apt to be more obvious and is therefore oftener interfered with by the parent. The boy is also more likely to recognize what he is doing and to accept the fact without the subterfuges that the girl acquires to cover up the meaning of the act.

There is no doubt that the term masturbation is properly used to designate these experiences of adolescence. The interest is no longer play or experiment or even adventuring in a half-recognized sex interest. In spite of the fact that there is generally still a great deal connected with sex that is not known, and much in the case of the girl that is greatly misunderstood, masturbation takes on a genuine sex content, and consequently there is in the sensitive, conscientious child

tremendous emotional recoil even when there is no distinct fear. It is amazing how the false teaching of a former period, that feeble-mindedness and insanity were caused by masturbation, persists. Children brought up in cultured homes by parents who take it for granted that they have protected their children from such ideas often suffer in their imagination the same torture which in a former period was regarded as well-deserved retribution.

### *Case 15*

J. Q. was a student at college. Before coming to the institution she had once at least attempted suicide. Frequently in trouble for discipline, extremely unpopular with most of her instructors, she gradually gave her confidence to one, and eventually handed over a long written statement which revealed that she too was suffering from fear of causing insanity by masturbation. She was prevailed upon to talk her problem over with her father, a distinguished scientist, who, once informed of the trouble, quickly put an end to it and built up intimate fellowship with the child whom he had unconsciously neglected. Her subsequent career brought him pride.

**Masturbation and marriage.** The literature related to masturbation reveals a considerable variation in the interpretation given it by different students of the problem. This is in part because science has been seriously investigating the problem only in very recent years and we have at present nothing like the amount of information that we need to have. But there is another reason for these differences of opinion. The effects of masturbation vary and certain types of specialists have attracted to them the types of difficulty which they are best prepared to meet. The interpretations of masturbation vary from the attitude of Dr. Robie, who sees in it something that may be temporarily therapeutic, to the attitude of those who believe that it signifies a neurotic trend. In spite of these differences of judgment there is common agreement that masturbation is likely to occur in adolescence and that it is desirable that it should not develop into an entrenched habit, persisting as the individual passes into the life of the adult, because of its adverse influence on marriage happiness. It is this significance of masturbation that interests us.

The adolescent who feels ashamed of his conduct and disloyal to his family is tempted to compensate by the expression of affection which drowns out his feeling of guilt. This naturally encourages fixa-

tion on the parent, particularly on the parent of the opposite sex. To see the problem in all its ramifications it is necessary to distinguish three types of masturbation. The first and most common has a heterosexual trend. Along with the conduct goes daydreaming which is tied up with representatives of the opposite sex. These reveries have a tendency to dwell upon relationships with individuals of an inferior economic or moral standing. That is, they are contrasted with the parent of their own sex and with all who belong to the corresponding group of persons thought of as pure and wholesome. Immediately seeds are sown that separate heterosexual attitudes into two diverse expressions. One signifies affection and the other sex in its narrowest and coarsest form. When this divorcement continues over a length of time there develops a dualistic urge toward marriage, one emphasizing love in which sex seems alien and debasing, and the other stressing passion from which the higher qualities are excluded; the individual is then driven toward the choice of a mate who emphasizes for him one or the other of these trends, and whichever he selects, sooner or later he craves the other. The consolidation of affection and physical sex becomes for him difficult.

There is a second type of masturbation which justifies the term homosexual. The masturbation experiences are shared with members of the same sex. If this continues over a long period of time and grows into a habit, there develops in turn an inclination to seek sex fellowship with members of the same sex. The following case illustrates this.

#### *Case 16*

N. I., a gifted, well-meaning boy was under a strongly homosexual teacher during high school with whom he and other boys came together from time to time to indulge in masturbation. The boy compensated for his conduct by an intense interest in religion, which gradually brought him distinction and leadership. As a consequence he trained himself to become an executive in one of the Christian organizations and upon entering his life work prospered. It fell to him to direct a summer camp for boys. By the accidental discovery of letters he wrote to one of the boys who had been under his guidance, a parent unearthed information which she passed on to persons in authority in that organization. The young man quickly confessed that he had been instructing the boys under his charge as to various forms of perversion. With some relief he accepted the decision that was made that he must enter another line of employment. Help



was given him and gradually he regained heterosexual interest and years later married and achieved normal family life.

This homosexual phase of masturbation is less common than the first. Sometimes masturbation is not a cause but rather a result of homosexuality that has been built up previous to puberty.

There seems to be need of designating a still different trend in masturbation. We have what may rightly be described as ego-sexuality masturbation. In this turn of interest the individual body itself is the center. The reveries are in no sense a substitute for heterosexual impulses nor is the experience shared with any member of the same sex. It is solitary and grows more and more a form of introvertive pleasure. This type obviously in comparison with the first is distinctly neurotic. Undoubtedly, Dr. Robie in what he has written concerning masturbation had in mind the first type and recognized merely the need of getting the individual to replace it as soon as possible by a more mature heterosexual interest. The patient needed encouragement to turn his attention to wholesome comradeship experiences and eventually to love. Thus masturbation was a passing phase in the development, which of course it was desirable to be rid of as soon as possible, that maturity might be attained, but it was not a problem of pathology. Clearly the homosexual type has a different significance and does lessen the chances of married happiness. The third type, however, has a very different complexion and unquestionably discloses neurotic trends. Even so, the experience is rather an expression of emotional and mental unsoundness than a cause, but it does constitute a problem which is serious, deserving the attention of a psychiatric specialist.

**The social consequences of failure of heterosexuality.** It is important to recognize that failure to achieve heterosexuality has a greater significance than appears within the realm of sex or even marriage. Conventions, social standards, civilization itself is adjusted to the attraction of persons of opposite sex. This can never be otherwise, since the normal physical impulses lead toward this form of sex stimulation and response. As a result of this, even if we assumed the greatest possible social tolerance toward deviation from the usual sex attitude and no restrictive legislation whatsoever—and there is nothing that prophesies such a condition—it would still be true that those controlled by homosexual desires would be segregated and would feel themselves peculiar. This sense of social difference would arise con-

stantly and could never be confined to the sphere of its origin. Even if they were free from outlawry they would still on account of their variation from the normal remain persons apart, constantly hampered in their relationships with their fellows. Concealment of this sex variation at present not only brings no relief but transfers the loneliness felt because of the attitudes of others to the inner reactions of the self.

Except for those so obsessed by their perversion as to have no concern for their social situation, it is clear that the conflict associated with the failure to achieve heterosexuality must necessarily be a disturbing force in all social adjustments just as surely as it antagonizes marriage and a successful family career. It tends to make one feel always a foreigner in his social contacts, an outsider who must remain aloof emotionally as he mingles with other people. Sex becomes for him a fountain of loneliness which never ceases to flow. Naturally he tends to draw close to those similar to himself in their reaction to life, but even his homosexual relationships cannot make him feel at home in a world where passion and love are so contrary to his own experience. His misfortune is less a vice than a defect. Necessarily because of his constant emotional collision with the world of normal people his entire life is organized around the point of conflict which so thoroughly separates him from other people. The following case illustrates the protest of the sensitive individual to the homosexual deviation.

### *Case 17*

I am almost sure that you do not remember me personally but I hardly think that greatly matters, as I believe my case is not at all unique to your experience. Of course what I write you is to be taken in absolute confidence as far as my personal name is connected with it. As for my experience itself, you may use it to illustrate anything you wish in your work. You may be offended at my even thinking this necessary to mention, but I am sure you realize with what anxiety and misgivings I even write this on paper.

My problem is, briefly, this: I cannot fall in love with a girl. I do not believe even the most beautiful and interesting girl in the world would attract me in the least in the regular sexual way. But what is worse, I often feel towards a boy exactly as I know I should feel towards girls. Not the same boy, understand. Sometimes a movie actor, sometimes a college chum. I am more attracted to the company of boys than of girls. Pos-

sibly this is to be explained by the fact that as a child I had few boy playmates, and grew up in the companionship of mother, sister, aunts, and girl cousins. I was physically weaker than the boys in my grades at school and was often—and I know, rightly—called a sissy, although since being in college I think I have succeeded, although with difficulty, in becoming a regular fellow to all outward appearances. Yet inwardly I do not seem to change much.

The following experience reveals how unconsciously homosexual affection can start.

*Case 18*

I teach school, and have always liked my boy pupils better than the girls—although I have been fond of some of the girls. I have been going with men since I was sixteen, and have had several love affairs. In the course of these affairs I was always very affectionate, liked to be kissed, and was demonstrative myself. I have also had many close girl friends, of whom I am very fond. But to them I have never been in the least demonstrative. I have never kissed a girl, except when meeting her after an absence, or preparing to leave her. I have never been demonstrative with my mother even.

But this year I have had an experience different from any others. There was a girl attending the school where I taught, and from the first moment I saw her I felt strangely attracted to her. I didn't teach her but saw her frequently around school. After I had been there a while she got a "crush" on me and began taking me to ride and going to my room to see me every afternoon. She was always perfectly respectful and did not, at first, show in any way that she liked me. But she continued to attract me in that strange way—and finally, she began to tell me how much she cared for me and was always wanting to hold my hand.

Perhaps I should tell you more about her. She is not like most girls—doesn't care for clothes, beaux, and things girls usually like. She often says she'd like to be a boy—and she has had "crushes" on girls before this. But she is an exceptionally attractive girl, and every one likes her. She says she doesn't care for boys, she likes girls better, but she has been going with a boy there in town for four years. He is very much in love with her and she seems to be in love with him, too.

But to come back to my relations with her. She continued to grow more and more demonstrative with me, until one afternoon when she was in my room, she suddenly started kissing me, just like a man would, and I, who have never kissed a girl, felt a thrill such as I have felt when kissed by a man I love. From that time on, whenever she kissed me, I continued to feel the same way, and she was very much affected. She

told me that kissing me gave her sensations her sweetheart's kisses didn't. I tried to talk to her, to show her that it wasn't normal or right for things to be that way between us, but I was hampered by lack of knowledge and experience in such a case.

She will be going off to college in the fall, and I know she will be getting "crushes" there—unless some one can help her. I love the child devotedly, as I would a young sister, and I am eager to try to help her overcome that trait, that is why I have appealed to you.

Is it some physical reason which makes her that way—or is it psychological? And why did she affect me as she did? What caused me to feel thrilled about her? Is there anything I can do or say to her to change her? She's such a fine girl that I hate for her to run the risk of becoming unpopular because of something she perhaps can't help. She is so perfectly normal in every other way—I cannot understand her nature.

I wondered if you could explain to me just what makes her love girls, or if you could suggest any books I might read on the subject which would help me to help her. She doesn't have just a foolish schoolgirl "crush"; she really loves me as a man would, and had I not been careful she would have demonstrated her affection in ways she shouldn't. I have read *The Well of Loneliness* and have wondered if she is a person of that type, but her love for the boy seems to deny that theory.

**Prostitution and heterosexual dualism.** Prostitution as a substitute for heterosexual affection carries the same risk associated with masturbation. The individual not only commonly seeks satisfaction from a woman of inferior status to himself but also thinks of her as out of the group of women to whom he could give affection. She becomes to him a symbol of physical sex unaccompanied with the emotional qualities he associates with women of normal characteristics. This splitting of the sex urge, generally hidden by a contemptuous attitude toward the individual prostitute, is not escaped by the absence of this reaction to the person herself. Independent of the particular emotional status she holds in his thought there is a separation of the spiritual fellowship and the physical pleasure which in normal heterosexual experience are intertwined. Both the man and the woman are conscious of this fact. The elimination of the psychic features of sex in their relationship reduces even the most primitive pleasure to a low and ordinarily unsatisfying level.

There is no need of exaggerating the meaning of this experience. Once habit is organized, marriage happiness is imperiled. The repetition of this severing of the two allied features of sex must lead neces-



sarily either to disgust for the physical and to a clinging to the psychic or to a gradual rubbing out of the psychic qualities of sex and the reducing of heterosexual appeal to its lowest terms.

The significance of either of these two reactions cannot be over-emphasized from the point of view of their effect upon married happiness. In the first there develops an increasing revolt against the physical aspect of marriage which is looked upon as debasing, so that love comes to be in contrast and antagonistic to it. On the other hand, the opposite habit leads either to a marriage which is nothing more than an attempt to legalize passion, or it makes the individual oblivious or indifferent to intimate, affectionate fellowship. An attempt to build up two different sorts of sex, one for the prostitute and one for all other women, does not work out.

Although the prostitute offers a form of heterosexual experience, it is not one that tends toward sound sex character. To the degree that her influence animalizes sex she antagonizes the emotional qualities necessary for sex happiness and maturity. The prostitute may so interpret sex as to make it seem in course of time intrinsically base and in contrast to affection which is looked upon as pure and worthy to the degree it escapes from physical passion.

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## CHAPTER XVII

### SEX ADJUSTMENT IN MARRIAGE

**Love as an art.** Domestic experience shows, as one would expect, that sex desire can easily become sex antagonism. Recoil and inability to work together are ever present in any coöperative undertaking. In the marital relations it may come about from the dissatisfaction of one of the partners with the physical experience itself, or it may be an antagonism resulting from friction at some other point in their association. In the one case the blame may rest upon faulty technique while in the other the difficulty goes deeper and the sex adjustment is injured by an incompatibility resulting from clashes of the two personalities.

Sex discord may be brought about so easily that it is suggested by some that men and women are potentially antagonistic and that their good adjustment represents the achievement of harmony in spite of this difficulty.<sup>1</sup> In any case the marital relation is something toward which neither the man nor the woman can be emotionally neutral. There is need, therefore, always, but particularly at the beginning of marriage, of recognizing the importance of favorable conditions before the sex act. This means that it is for the advantage of both the man and the woman to realize the importance of the art of love and to have some insight as to how to practice it effectively.

Environmental circumstances should be made as propitious as possible. For some individuals this suggestion has little significance and for others the very greatest. As a rule, a person through experience comes to realize what environmental circumstances help and what hinder adjustment. This discovery, however, cannot be mutual if the one who is decidedly susceptible to conditions of light, quiet, privacy, perfumery and the like withholds this information from the other. In so simple a matter as this frank discussion helps immeasurably; ignorance as to the value of such matters and reticence in revealing them

<sup>1</sup> Th. H. Van de Velde, *Sex Hostility in Marriage*.

prove an obstacle to the art of love-making. Here we have another example of the unnecessary difficulty sex adjustment encounters because of the influence which the one-time policy of taboo still has. Individuals who are fully conscious of the advantage of surrounding eating and sleeping with conditions that favor appetite and slumber remain strangely indifferent to the environmental settings that help or hinder sex experience in marriage. The desirability of reënforcing sex desire by stimulation and by pleasant suggestion was something that Dr. W. F. Robie in his private practice strongly emphasized to those who came to consult him regarding sex maladjustment in marriage.

What is true regarding external surroundings is even more important when applied to the body of the man and the woman. Unless on the part of both there comes about a readiness, even a strong desire for coitus, any attempt to enter upon it is foolhardy and may easily start an antagonism which similar experiences may make stronger and stronger. This is true at the beginning of marriage just as it is from that time onward. It follows that husband and wife cannot enjoy the enrichment of satisfying experience with each other unless physical desire simultaneously arises in both of them or is awakened by their preliminary association. From this point of view the art of love-making is not a much-needed accessory but something indispensable without which sex intimacy is not only unsatisfactory but hazardous both to sex appetite and to domestic fellowship.

It might seem that at the very start of marriage an appetite could not be created for something never before experienced. This, however, is not the case. Fortunately, the nervous equipment of the body, in spite of the fact that it has gone so far from the primitive simple instinct, is susceptible to stimulation and automatically produces favorable circumstances within the body even though the full meaning of the experience may not be realized by the man or woman to whom it is something entirely new. Unfortunately, in this early period, there are women who are both drawn toward and away from their initial experience in sex because the operation of the nervous mechanism is antagonized if not prostrated by adverse conditioning received at some earlier time. Ordinarily there is, at least so far as the woman is concerned, a degree of curiosity and a desire to demonstrate loyalty that crowds out the opposition which arises from psychic inhibition or fear.



*Case 19*

Miss S. found herself at the age of forty seriously considering an offer of marriage made by a man, five years her senior, who for some ten years had been living the life of a widower. He had no children by his former wife and no economic problem was involved, because, although he was in comfortable circumstances, he could not offer her from the financial point of view anything superior to her own independent life, since she was professionally successful. She had never been interested in men up to the time she met this gentleman, for, as a matter of fact, she had from childhood had fear of sex and never entertained the idea of marrying. She believes that at thirty under no circumstances could she have considered even the possibility of marriage, so strongly was she conditioned against anything that had to do with sex. During the last five years, as a result of study and considerable reading she had been led consciously to face her sex problem and had become fully aware of its origin. Her widowed father had not only strictly limited her association with boys from the days of her elementary school training but in addition he had created in her a vague fear of them which at a later time caused her to become panic-stricken whenever a man became demonstrative in his expression of affection for her. She was in her other attitudes toward life mature and fact-facing with no suggestion of neurotic reaction. Her reading was motivated not by any morbid curiosity but from her self-discovery which had made her feel that her attitude was unreasonable and had cost her the home life and motherhood which she had always vaguely realized was a sincere desire. When the acquaintance with this particular man developed, and in due time the question of marriage arose, she dealt with the problem in a conscious, intelligent way.

As a result of information given her by the man she insisted on his having a thorough examination and then sought definite interpretation of the statements made by his doctor. He was suffering from *prostatitis* which two years previous had required an operation. She desired a definite knowledge of the significance of this for their union and in addition information as to the effect of her age as a possible complication in their happy relationship. She also went thoroughly into the problem of financial budget and talked frankly with him concerning the program of house-keeping that she intended to follow. After gathering all insight possible she made her decision to marry and thus far has proved that she was wise in her choice. She is meeting her problems in the same mature way that she entered matrimony and illustrates the advantage of an intellectual facing of a sex problem, even when the latter is rooted in an emotional hostility. The case of Miss C. is of a similar character, merely duplicating the essential elements in the career of Miss S.

**Sex differences.** In the literature which deals with marital adjustment much is made of the need of awakening in the woman's body the desire for sex intimacy. This does not mean that the physical appetite is for her something artificial or that it has a less substantial nervous basis than in the case of man. To be sure, this is a common notion not only among women but also among men. From this point of view the art of love depends on the man's skill in leading the woman into an acceptance of something that she does not much want. No idea could be more at variance with fact or carry with it more unfortunate implications. Sex desire is a human, not a masculine, endowment.

There is a fact, however, behind this distortion which explains the origin of this unhappy interpretation, and it is a fact that does deserve attention. Woman's sex life is more complicated, that is, more diffused and more elaborate, than that of the man, and on account of this her desire for primary sex experience, that is, coitus, may not be felt so quickly or so consciously as man's.

Under such circumstances it does become necessary that her body be awakened so as to respond to sex stimulation not only with a general reaction but with a specific hunger for primary contact. This, of course, the man must realize lest he force upon the woman that for which she is not ready with the inevitable consequence of disappointment for her and eventually for him in the sex relation. The technique that he needs is not that of the actor who assumes a part but rather a pouring out of love's feeling in an unselfish abandonment of self. This is not difficult if only there be no concentration on the egoistic craving for sex pleasure. It would not be true to say that the art of love is untaught and unteachable, but it would be false to build up confidence in mere technique which is unaccompanied by tender emotion and genuine affection.

Because the man so often assumes the initiative it does not follow, as has been said previously in another connection, that the woman's part is passive and that she merely responds to the man's manipulation. This indeed may be true, but it is not the situation most favorable for a satisfying sex adjustment. Nor must it be assumed that the man always takes the initiative or that the woman never has the stronger or quicker impulses toward sex intimacy. The situation normally is a changing one, and in cases not a few from the very beginning of marriage the woman is the more eager and takes the more ac-

tive part in the marital experience. Nothing could be more foolish than for the man to assume that he must awaken what already is intense, and that he must follow a stated and precise procedure which can be expected under all circumstances to lead his wife toward sex desire. What he does need to heed is the admonition that he must not force upon the wife an intimacy to which for lack of sufficient body preparation she cannot whole-heartedly respond.

It is on account of the need of preventing this that verbal and book counseling give so much attention to the advantage of sex play. This in simple terms is the repetition of courtship experiences which before marriage were found agreeable and were unquestionably sex stimulating. This play, which is essentially the expression of affection and the love of mutual response, goes forward without restriction, finally leading to direct sensory stimulation that in turn moves upon the nervous mechanism and awakens the body hunger which nature has so abundantly established in the human adult. In this procedure the woman is no passive recipient but she in turn by her responsiveness becomes the source of stimulation to the body of the man, and thus back and forth in a reciprocating relationship go stimulus and response leading both the man and the woman forward to a satisfying physical sex fellowship.

It may seem strange that so simple a matter has such attention, that so much preachment has been offered man, but there are two reasons for this. One is the occasional selfishness of the male which his egoistic sex policy merely reveals; and the other is the false notion, still too prevalent among both men and women, that the latter are lacking in sex desire, so that there is no need of considering their reaction, and that if they recoil from the experience it may be unfortunate but must be considered an inevitable reaction to which the man should give no heed. Selfish men marry just as selfish men enter business or the government or attempt some other activity in life. Their selfishness appears quickly in the supreme expression of personality in marriage. They insist on their rights and obtain a meager satisfaction, never realizing their losses because they have had no experience of what sex under happier circumstances can bring. Knowing the dangers of this form of male dominance and arrogance, those familiar with domestic experience naturally stress the need of considering the woman and the desirability of preliminary sex play that will bring her to physical and emotional response to the man's sex hunger.

The other cause of trouble is being gradually eliminated. The present generation of marrying young people has a far better understanding of the rôle of the woman, but even yet it is possible to find intelligent men and women who believe either that the woman is largely destitute of sex passion or that her sex life is stunted compared with that of the man, and needs to be artificially and elaborately stimulated before it can become responsive to the man's impulses. When one realizes how long this false notion of woman's sex life has prevailed and how tied up with custom and morality it has been, the rapid change that already has taken place, once society permitted freedom of expression, is remarkable and gives testimony to the seriousness of woman's sex problems.

It is possible, and this needs to be recognized, that the woman, for reasons often subtle and unconscious as a result of earlier conditioning, may hold back and by curbing her impulses create a situation in which it falls upon the man to remove a barrier which forbids a mutual, coöperating sex experience. This sort of thing is more likely to occur in the early stages of marriage and discloses the difficult transition that many a woman has to make from a period when everything connected with sex was made to seem to her unworthy, to the new situation where for the moment the most idealistic experience of her life seems to be largely sexual in character. It is not surprising that she has difficulty in switching quickly her attitudes toward sex, so that what was kept out of her conscious feeling and thought is now accepted as a foundation of the love she craves more than anything else in the world.

She may make no open protest; indeed, so far as her decision is consciously made, she may surrender to what her intelligence tells her must have a prominent place in marriage. In spite of this, however, in practice an inhibition may arise resulting in a holding back on her part so that the man does have to break through her defenses by the strength of response that he can arouse, or instead of this happening she may check the natural momentum of the experience and be left at the time of the man's satisfaction with physical tension and psychic disappointment. It is not difficult to see how the repetition of this during the early months of marriage may end in disillusionment and despair, an undermining of the woman's physical health, and perhaps finally in separation and divorce.



A case that has just appeared illustrates this much too common development of incompatibility on account of sex failure in early marriage.

*Case 20*

Mr. and Mrs. R. have been married four years. They were deeply in love with each other and appear still to have a strong affection each for the other. In spite of this they are now debating whether or not they should separate. They have had during their marriage experience various sorts of troubles, but in the minds of both of them the essential difficulty has been their dissatisfaction with sex. They both feel the same concerning this. Neither blames the other but both have come to feel that they are not fitted for married life together. They were both extraordinarily ignorant of sex and even now are uncertain whether their procedure is in accord or at variance with the art of love. They have one child eighteen months old, of whom they are both very fond. The mother was considerably torn in the birth experience and appears not to have had adequate treatment from the surgeon before or after delivery. Her condition has been accepted by both of them as sufficient reason for ending their sex intimacy, and since the birth of the child, as the husband states it, "We have been as if we were no longer husband and wife."

From the start of marriage, with no exception, their sex relation has been a continuous defeat. Stupid as it may seem, neither of them has until now attempted to get special help, for their ignorance has been so great as to make them feel that their situation was due to some defect on the part of one or both that could not be remedied. Their sex failure explains in part their highly nervous condition. Their natural tendency has been augmented by their discussion of whether or not they should separate and the fear each has that in the end a divorce will be necessary. The love they feel for the child complicates and intensifies their reaction. They appear sincere, neither being willing to charge the other with fault, and both being most eager to be given information and assistance that will set them right. Their situation had become so desperate that the man broke his reticence and spoke to a friend who happened to be acquainted with the work that is being done by those who deal with sex maladjustment. The husband acted immediately, given the suggestion, and traveled a considerable distance that he might present his problem and arrange for assistance for himself and his wife. No brief description of the emotional conflict of these two individuals can convey to the reader the seriousness of their situation. Although the case is still in process, it is apparent that the first cause of trouble was the false conception of both husband and wife as to the sex nature of woman. Sensitive

people, they entered marriage destitute of knowledge of sex, each supposing it was chiefly a masculine experience. They knew too little even to realize the necessity of getting adequate information and changing their attitudes.

Even when there is no special difficulty on account of misinformation or emotional protest against sex on the part of the woman, there is the necessity of working out a unique and mutually satisfying marital adjustment. This is a matter that cannot be overstated. Individuals are not searching for a standard sex technique comparable to a procedure worked out by an efficiency specialist in reorganizing a business, or by a surgeon in performing a certain kind of operation. In these latter instances a scheme can be built up from experience that can be applied generally, since it represents the one good way of accomplishing the purpose in mind. Nothing could be farther away from the art of love. There are those who do not understand this and sometimes ask a marriage counselor to suggest what the husband and wife should accept as the precise and unchanging technique for the making of love. This is altogether wrong. What they do require is a willingness to achieve by experimentation and variation an adjustment well adapted to their needs and satisfying—a unique relationship rather than a duplication without individuality or peculiarity. It is true that knowledge of the experiences of others, as interpreted by the specialist, proves helpful, but not because it is to be set up as a standard toward which the couple must force themselves, but rather because it gives suggestion and insight in the light of which they can work out their own practices according to their pleasure and preference. They are not to struggle to conform, they are to work together to discover their own sex cravings and methods of satisfaction. The significance of this distinction is second to nothing that concerns happy sex adjustment.

If there be a conscious program, and this is the inevitable result whenever people attempt to deal rationally with any undertaking, it must be built upon one or the other of these opposite conceptions of the art of love. In the one case there is a straining after an objective performance which is assumed to be indispensable in happy married life. On the other hand, there is a realization that their path to happiness the two must find together by adventuring and exploring

within their own sex character. What they are to achieve must be as individual, as natural an outcome of their comradeship as is their association in its other aspects.

Even for them, however, there is not a definite final program which needs once to be acquired and forever continued without variation. Here also is a substantial misinterpretation of the art of love which brings couples to dissatisfaction. Change ever accompanies life and the sex side of personality is no more stationary than other characteristics. The mood of the moment, the existing physical vigor, the time and the circumstances, all play a part, giving each particular sex experience its special coloring. Failure to realize this and over-confidence in a mere love technique bring forth for many a monotony which is dangerous to permanent and increasing happiness. Some who have staked everything upon physical satisfaction become satiated and grow increasingly indifferent to an experience that seems to them to belong only to the early stages of marriage. Others, realizing their loss, seek a renaissance of sex appetite by flirtation or promiscuity or even by a transference of affection to another person who has temporarily reawakened sex desire.

Unquestionably at present this feeling of monotony by those who find themselves in middle life without romance and sex zest becomes for some men and some women the cause of a temptation to abandon domestic loyalty and fellowship in the effort once again to taste the earlier pleasures that sex brought. The mistake of allowing habit to grow so rigid that life becomes a dreary routine is ever present as people are carried by increasing years farther and farther away from the period of youth. Ordinarily, those to whom this happens accept their destiny without protest, even when they grow conscious of what has been left behind. In the case of sex monotony, however, there is more likely to arise an unwillingness to surrender what for a time at least brought unrivaled satisfaction. Since the partner is blamed for the fading away of sex interest, the idea develops that through a new alliance a revival of sex can be brought about.

The danger of making these mistakes in sex policy would less often appear if from the start of marriage men and women made greater use of their imagination, were more willing to adventure and to experiment and to abandon themselves in their marital intimacy. Even the positions taken in intercourse can be varied, for here also there is no

standard, no rightness and wrongness, but merely a convention which differs in various sections of the world.<sup>2</sup>

Of course, no program, however far it keeps from sex monotony, can prevent the seasonable changes in sex vigor that go on with the changes of the body structure. Although there is a surprising difference between individual men and women in the degree to which they prolong their earlier sex vitality, the general diminution is unmistakable and in accord with the physical career of the person. In addition to the natural lessening of sex energy it must be remembered also that no experience, however satisfying, can have after considerable repetition the same qualities that belonged to the time when it was something novel and unfamiliar. This fundamental fact of psychic experience appears in the sex history of individuals as it does in everything else in their life, nor would any one wisely seek to prevent the normal changes that occur in the experiences of men and women. In no part of life is the old proverb more meaningful than here, for indeed everything is good in its season. It is the lack of variation in their sex fellowship that creates the feeling of monotony, not the instinctive need of promiscuous relationships.

It is not uncommon for men and women to find growing old tragic and to react bitterly against it. This general protest on the part of those who look backward to happier circumstances from which they feel themselves banished has a specific expression in the attitude of those who reluctantly move away from the sex vitality of early manhood and womanhood. In many of these cases too much has been staked upon the sex side of marriage. Little has been done to cultivate mutual interest and comradeship along other lines. Parenthood has been permitted to be little more than a solemn duty or a mere routine of responsibilities, so that the chief meaning of domestic association has been that of sex. With the inevitable lessening of this interest, marriage has seemed a relationship with ever-diminishing returns.

In the wholesome program sex is neither abandoned as of little consequence just as soon as passion begins to shrink nor is it clung to as the only support for mutual happiness. Its lessening is not due to choice nor to lack of appreciation of the value it continues to have until it absolutely fades away, but on the other hand a community of

<sup>2</sup> Th. H. Van de Velde, *Ideal Marriage, Its Physiology and Technique*, Chap. II.



other interests is built up, affection is broadened and the communion becomes a varied fellowship. There are those who have had so much conflict, so many tumultuous experiences in sex, that they welcome, as they confess, its final passing, but this attitude is an admission that their sex career has never become for them the positive good it is to those who achieve a satisfactory adjustment.

In any case it needs to be recognized from the beginning of marriage that the art of love is more than learning how to get during the period of greatest sex vigor the largest possible satisfaction. It is rather learning to make an adaptation which is continuous and ever-changing according to circumstances. The later years of marriage cannot have the quality belonging to the first period. Just how significant this time element is depends upon the meaning of sex for the individual husband and wife. Here as in every other aspect of sex experience we find amazing variation between the two extremes of its passing surprisingly early and its remaining until late life with little diminution. When science obtains a better command over the facts of sex experience we may discover that the former situation is unnecessary, representing a premature decay of sex, while the other is the ideal, the result of successful practice of the art of love.

**Failures of adjustment.** The diagnosis of failure in marriage adjustment is sometimes extremely difficult. In other cases the causal explanation of the marital trouble appears clear and certain. Usually in order to understand the failure we need to analyze a complicated situation. We seldom can assign to any one person by himself or to any special influence by itself the entire responsibility for marriage unhappiness. Nevertheless, if the danger of too simple an explanation is kept in mind it proves an advantage to distinguish the common causes that appear in marital difficulties.

(1) A painful start of marital relations. The individual who finds her first sex experience in marriage painful because of her husband's hastiness or awkwardness, or because of a temporary structural obstacle in herself, may be led, especially if her reaction has been encouraged by earlier psychological aversion, to hate sex and everything connected with it. Even though she later becomes tolerant in accepting this part of marriage as an obligation from which she cannot escape, she may never rid herself of the deep-seated repugnance that will destroy both for her and for her husband the possibilities of satisfactory sex adjustment.

(2) There may be a structural defect which makes it impossible for the wife to have a satisfactory marital experience until the difficulty has been corrected. This may not be of serious character and usually is not, but it may remain an obstacle to happiness until surgical assistance is obtained.

(3) The wife may have had the misfortune of entering upon marriage when she was not in good health or even when she was suffering from some form of physical illness which would necessarily influence her experience in sex and her attitude toward it.

(4) Masturbation. This cause of trouble may befall either the man or the woman. A long-continued and well-established habit of masturbation which has led toward homosexual attitudes may, once marriage is entered upon, become a serious barrier to happiness. This fact explains why it is unwise to encourage the individual who recognizes in himself strong homosexual tendencies to marry as a means of establishing heterosexual attitudes. The individual who has had a long conflict with this habit may suppose that once he or she is married there will no longer be any temptation toward the earlier sex pleasure. It is assumed that the old habit will disappear as soon as heterosexual opportunities are furnished. But to the surprise of the man or woman this does not occur. Instead the new experience proves disappointing and the inclination to return to former practices for relief leads to conflict. While this situation continues it is clear that marital adjustment cannot be had.

(5) Another common cause of maladjustment is the persistent inability of the husband to prolong the sex act so that the wife as well as he can be satisfied. This problem of premature ejaculation is frequently present in the very early period of marriage and may have physical or psychic causes or a combination of both. Usually the difficulty is due to nervousness or to fear of failure. It is, as a rule, of no greater consequence than the woman's opposite difficulty in making her adjustment to the new circumstances of marriage. On the other hand if the husband's disability remains chronic, he becomes a constant source of stimuli, awakening in his wife sex desire which because of his failure in the love act remains unsatisfied. When this condition arises the problem is serious, and unless a cure can be brought about by a medical or psychiatric specialist, according to whether the root of the trouble is physical or psychic, the marriage re-

lationship is likely to become torture for the woman or even for both husband and wife.

The most common cause of marital incompatibility along physical lines is best described as failure in love making by the husband or the wife or by both together. This has been discussed in an earlier part of this chapter. Either the man or woman may through ignorance, selfishness, or an emotional complex, spoil the marital relation by failure in the art of love.

There are seven common causes of marital difficulty that appear on the psychic side.

(1) The first is disgust with sex. This is likely to appear, if at all, at the beginning of the marriage and suggests an unpreparedness for the experience, which seems unbelievable until it is realized how ignorant women who marry may be of what is involved. This psychic recoil is often associated with the painful start which for many women constitutes their first physical sex experience in marriage. When disgust arises the man may be at fault by his unhappy procedure in introducing the sex element of marriage, or on the other hand the explanation of the woman's reaction may be distinctly subjective, related to her early attitude toward sex. Although disgust is much more frequent among women than men, occasionally we have instances of the same maladjustment among the latter and sometimes this also is caused by the way sex was first presented in marriage.

(2) Fear of pregnancy operates, as one would expect, in lessening sex pleasure and occasionally in making it so fearful that satisfactory adjustment is not possible. The danger of this has been so impressed upon marriage consultants that many of them advocate the use of contraceptives during the first month of marriage even though the wife and husband both intend to have children. It is found that if the thought of immediate pregnancy is associated in the thought of the woman with her first sex experiences, she cannot easily adjust to the latter. She should accomplish this before she assumes the risk of pregnancy.

(3) Trouble may come from either the husband's or the wife's unfavorable reaction to the method of contraception they are using. This difficulty is most likely to occur among those who do not have a modern knowledge of contraception such as can be gained at a birth control clinic or from a trained physician, but who are using an inade-

quate form of birth control because it is the only one of which they happen to have knowledge.

(4) Another cause of trouble which in the nature of the case is found only among women is the habit of inhibiting sex desire by struggling against the appearance of passion. They suppress responsiveness to sex stimuli until eventually the ability to enjoy the marital experience is destroyed.

(5) The emergence of guilt feeling on account of some past occurrence in the early sex history may produce marriage incompatibility. It matters not whether the event against which there is reaction was of real or imaginary importance. It is the strength of the reaction and not the character of the offense that decides how serious this feeling will be in antagonizing wholesome sex relations.

(6) Conscious homosexual desire may be a sufficient cause of an extremely difficult maladjustment.

(7) The marital difficulty may be rooted in the awakening of the husband or the wife to the fact that the marriage is a mistake from lack of love or because he or she is really in love with somebody else and for motives of pride or revenge or jealousy or ambition or the obtaining of wealth has contracted a marriage that cannot be successful unless it can be reestablished on a more honest basis.

An example of a more subtle causation than anything suggested by an enumeration of the common roots of difficulty is the reaction of the woman who is opposed to sex in marriage because she is hostile to the idea of masculine dominance. Her feeling is a product of innumerable reactions that she has made in times past as she has been forced to play in sex the feminine rôle which to her has signified submission to the male. She marries with the expectation that she will dominate her husband as she has been doing in most ways from the beginning of courtship. The one obstacle to her power is sex, which as she interprets it necessarily gives leadership to the man. Instead of accepting this subordination whole-heartedly, surrendering all protests, she rebels and struggles against her own passion. She may become the mother of children but she never yields herself to sex without strong inner recoil because from her point of view it puts her in an inferior and subordinated relationship.

**Examination preparatory for marriage.** The requirement of a medical examination as prerequisite to certain undertakings is not uncommon at the present time in this country. We have grown fa-



miliar with the idea that the candidate for the foreign mission or for promotion in the army and navy, the police department, and numbers of other occupations should first pass a medical examination. This common procedure needs only to be applied to those entering upon matrimony to provide the scientist an opportunity to prepare young people intelligently to meet the problems of marriage. Already we have in many of the states a requirement for a meager type of physical examination which in the case of the male at least emphasizes freedom from the venereal diseases. As has been shown in an earlier part of this book, the most valuable result that comes from this legislation is its educational influence and its emphasis upon the seriousness of matrimony. A rational preparation for marriage carries the idea of a premarital examination much farther than anything at present required by the laws of the American states that have enacted medical certification as prerequisite to marriage.

Although there is no legal insistence upon a thorough-going physical examination before marriage, there are already young people who voluntarily go to their physician for examination and for instruction previous to their wedding. This is such a reasonable procedure that it seems safe to prophesy that before very long it will be a common routine in many countries. There is no undertaking that can profit more from a preparatory examination and instruction than marriage. As people more generally come to appreciate the value of medical health examinations and begin to realize how helpful similar examinations preparatory for marriage prove, it would seem inevitable that public opinion, if not legislation, would require a premarital examination for both the man and the woman.

It is not merely that there is a genuine need before entering marriage of obtaining definite individual insight and a realization of any special difficulty that may arise, but fortunately it is true also that medical science is well prepared to furnish this insight and counsel. If this were more generally understood there would be a rapid acceleration of the present trend toward seeking a medical examination before entering matrimony. Dr. Robert L. Dickinson, who has done much to interest the physician in developing an examination as preparation for marriage, advocates that the prospective bride and groom visit a competent doctor a month or two before their wedding for a physical examination and instruction in the physical and mental as-

pects of sex.<sup>3</sup> Doubtless there are those who would object to this on the ground that it would be destructive to romance, but this is a mistaken idea. Any love emotion so easily shattered may more wisely meet its ordeal before rather than after marriage is established. There is, fortunately, no inherent incompatibility between romance and intelligent preparation. The premarital examination program cannot be justly charged with over-emphasizing the physical. What it accomplishes is to make both the man and woman conscious of what the physical element of marriage involves while at the same time giving them every assistance of science in the achieving of successful adjustment. In Europe there has already been considerable development of marriage stations which in part carry on this preparatory service. In Holland, in Germany, and in Austria these serve an ever-increasing clientele.

The premarital examination must not be interpreted as merely an effort to discover and certify fitness for marriage. Although naturally it would lead occasionally to the discovery that individuals had no right to marry, its chief aim is to give insight and instruction regarding marriage that it may from the start have propitious circumstances. The pre-marriage examination deserves to be thought of as a form of preventive medicine, a consultation service that logically belongs to the field of gynecology. The instruction should be given to the man and the woman separately and in part to both of them together. It would best consist of a frank talk, clearly and simply given, before and after the physical examination. It would deal with the fears and inhibitions that commonly appear in the feeling and the thinking of the man and the woman entering upon sex adjustment.

It would also include an explanation of the art of love, bringing out the differences between men and women and between individuals of the same sex. Contraception would be discussed also if this were desired by either man or woman. Care would be taken in this talking over of the problems of marriage not to create any suggestion of pathology or abnormality. Both the man and woman would be encouraged to ask questions, and if it seemed desirable they would be urged to read literature presenting in popular form information that they needed to study. Emphasis would be placed upon the effects

<sup>3</sup> *Premarital Examination as Routine Preventive Gynecology*, pamphlet published by Committee on Maternal Health, New York.

of previous sex attitudes, that they might become conscious of possible sources of difficulty.

After the physical examination they would also be told of any special adjustment difficulty they might possibly encounter. As is true always in the general health examination, they would be furnished with a definite program to meet this, built upon their own individual needs. In order that this advice can be given, both the man and woman should go at the same time to the same physician, that he may counsel each of them, knowing the conditions and peculiarities of the other.

The physical examination would consist of a structural investigation of both the man and the woman for the purpose of finding out their readiness to accept the responsibilities of marriage. If the examination is to be thoroughgoing and useful, there must be an anatomic examination of both the woman and the man. Dr. Dickinson advocates testing the male for fertility and the female for possible fibroid tumor. The structure of the female should be examined to detect the liability of a painful start in marriage, and any minor surgical assistance that may be indicated should be performed. It is far better to discover unfavorable conditions of body equipment liable to create dissatisfaction or pain at the beginning of marriage than to seek medical assistance after problems have originated. If a really serious handicap is uncovered by the examination, it is surely better to have this knowledge before marriage than after, and it is just that the persons concerned should have an opportunity to decide, knowing the full consequences, whether to enter upon marriage or break the engagement. For example, if it appears that the male is infertile or only slightly fertile, it is an act of fairness for the girl who is planning to marry him to know this before rather than after her wedding. The woman's structural configuration, which determines the probable ease or difficulty of childbirth, could at this time also be investigated and the couple could then marry with foreknowledge in cases where pregnancy would be likely to bring special problems.

It is no criticism of this program for a rational preparation for marriage to insist that it is at present too ideal for most men and women. Their indifference is not born of hostility to the thought of undergoing an examination, but to lack of knowledge. Most men and most women when they marry have the will to succeed. Science should be asked to give them all the help possible in working out their good in-

tentions. Most of them have no idea what assistance science is at present prepared to give.

**Medical assistance after marriage.** It is perhaps not surprising that at the present time there is such widespread ignorance as to the value of a pre-marriage examination. In spite of the progress that has been made in preventive medicine, we still find among physicians as well as among the laity a considerable failure to appreciate the advantages of health examinations designed to prevent disease and to instruct the individual that he may best conserve physical vigor. In spite of the publicity of such agencies as the Life Extension Institute, a great majority of American people still regard the physician's business to be the curing of those who are ill. Under such circumstances it is not strange that the importance of a pre-marriage examination is realized by so few men and women.

It is, however, surprising that so many who suffer after marriage in their sex adjustment for reasons that require medical diagnosis do not seek the curative service of the physician. Even when the husband or wife awakens to the need of medical attention, there frequently is hesitation in going to the doctor because of reticence to confess any sort of sex difficulty. If it were more generally understood how serious such problems may become and how distinctly they are related to matters of general health, this false modesty would soon disappear. It would be generally felt that any continuing sex problem needs the attention of a doctor just as much as a sore throat, or a pain in the side that suggests appendicitis.

Even when men and women seek a pre-marriage examination it is too much to expect that they will always by means of this counsel before marriage escape later problems. In no department of activity is preventive medicine expected to guarantee that under later and different circumstances no problem of health will arise. There will always, therefore, be need of some wives and some husbands seeking after marriage medical assistance and counsel in dealing with a concrete difficulty that has appeared as a consequence of or during matrimony. The important thing for the young man and woman to realize is that most of these disturbances, however serious they may become if continued over a length of time, are easily handled provided the physician is called in early. Ordinarily if a month has passed and no headway has been made in solving some physical or mental handicap that is making satisfactory sex adjustment impossible, a physician of



experience or a psychiatrist should be consulted, according to the nature of the difficulty.

It must not be supposed that this is something of importance only for sex harmony. Even if the disturbance be distinctly sexual in character, it has a significance for general health and nervous stability, for companionability, and even under some circumstances may lessen or prevent fertility.

Case records of the psychoanalyst disclose to us how complex such maladjustments may be, not reducible to a single cause but involving a multiplication of causes which are brought to the surface by the specialist. In some instances the solution of the problem at hand means a reëducation of the individual for life, and as this leads to the attaining of a more wholesome and stable personality it proves of incomparable value aside from its importance for sex experience.<sup>4</sup>

Although it is undesirable in this discussion to consider at any length the pathology of sex, both men and women need to know the kinds of problems that most commonly appear after marriage and require professional assistance. For the man impotence represents one such difficulty. There is a great difference in the meaning of this experience depending upon the length of time it persists. If impotence continues in a husband belonging to the age group when sex vigor is to be expected, a specialist should be consulted. Frequently this trouble is of nervous origin and of temporary duration.

There are two conditions that spoil the adjustment of the woman, of which every intelligent man and woman should have some understanding. The first is *dyspareunia*, or the feeling of pain during the sex act. Dickinson found in the personal history of eight hundred women 161 who suffered from this experience. In his control group of 200 women fourteen additional definite cases of dyspareunia were discovered, making a total of 175 which he studied.<sup>5</sup> Hamilton found among a hundred women five who declared the sex act always caused pain and fifty who occasionally suffered.<sup>6</sup> In Dickinson's cases fifty-seven patients had a physical cause for their difficulty equally divided between anatomical defects and inflammation. Nearly all of these were cured after treatment, even though all but five had had a chronic

<sup>4</sup> Wilhelm Stekel, *Frigidity in Woman*, p. 181.

<sup>5</sup> R. L. Dickinson and L. Beam, *A Thousand Marriages*, p. 168.

<sup>6</sup> G. V. Hamilton, *A Research in Marriage*, p. 378.

condition ranging from three to eighteen years.<sup>7</sup> Forty-eight women appeared in trouble for purely psychic reasons or a combination of physical and psychic.

The remainder of the 175 were defined as suffering from *frigidity*, a female defect suggestive of the male's problem of impotence. Frigidity is inability to respond to the sex act and apparent lack of sex desire. This is not an organic disease but a psychic reaction in the realm of sex. Of the hundred cases studied by Dickinson nine-tenths were known to have had original sexual capacity and at some time desire for the husband.<sup>8</sup> *Vaginismus*, or nervous contraction on the part of the woman, Dickinson considers a specialized form of dyspareunia. Hamilton found in his hundred women eight afflicted with this difficulty and one who rarely experienced it.<sup>9</sup> Hamilton states that he has never encountered a woman suffering from this difficulty who failed to present convincing evidence that its origin was essentially psychological, although he recognizes this is not the conclusion of all gynecologists.<sup>10</sup>

The fact that the common serious handicaps to sex adjustment are rarely of structural origin, and therefore are curable, enforces the need of those who marry recognizing that if they have persistent trouble they should seek medical and psychiatric assistance. It is as unreasonable to go on with a sex defect without a physician's advice as it is, for example, to fail to correct imperfect vision or faulty hearing. The common reluctance to take sex problems to the physician is another evidence of the mischief that has come from the former policy of taboo.

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## CHAPTER XVIII

### COMRADESHIP IN MARRIAGE

**Sex in marriage.** Sex has for men and women a fundamental significance. It has been planted so deeply in human nature that no normal person can escape its influence. However strong the individual may build his or her barriers against even the thought of sex, it will break through and in some manner influence character. It cannot be eluded because it is built into human nature and organically is made a constituent of man and of woman. Although its influence is nearly continuous throughout the life of every individual, and in the opinion of some is in evidence from birth until death, its importance for marriage is special and unrivaled.

In spite of the universal human need for intimate comradeship and the complementary character of friendship between men and women, any relationship between them approaching marriage fellowship in intensity and permanency would be most unusual were it not for the fact of sex attraction. Thus sex makes marriage possible and marriage in turn offers sex its most complete expression in human experience. Marriage can do no more than this. It cannot furnish automatically satisfactory sex adjustment. This is something that must be achieved by the individuals concerned through the fellowship which marriage provides.

The man and woman entering marriage, unless it be a mere legal procedure, devoid of genuine meaning, start a new epoch in their sex careers. They come heavily conditioned by past experience, not only in sex traits but also in other habits and attitudes, which by influencing their life together will also help or hinder sex adjustment. Marriage provides sex with the opportunity for its most complete and mature expression, but by so doing it also becomes a test of the individual's wholesome development. It is obvious that mere expectation is not sufficient to guarantee success. Even the most thoughtless of persons realize as they step into marriage that their happiness is at stake and that new demands are to be made of them, while the con-

scientious, however confident and enthusiastic, realize that they need all possible insight.

Fortunately marriage can rarely be described as an ordeal, but it is always a novel experience for which the prudent feel the need of every possible assistance and preparation. It is desirable to achieve this adjustment quickly, completely, and with the utmost satisfaction. To accomplish this and to lessen the inevitable problems of adjustment there is need from the beginning of realizing that sex comradeship must be mutual and that adjustment comprises a three-fold intimacy. These are so intertwined that it may seem arbitrary to separate them, but they need to be distinguished since the failure of adjustment along any one line will lessen the success of the other two. Obviously there must be body adjustment, but this aspect of the sex life cannot remain isolated. The thinking and the feeling aspects of the sex life of both the man and the woman are likewise involved in their reactions. Because of this it is common to speak of the physical, intellectual and emotional sides of sex comradeship.

From the very beginning of marital experience each of these three plays a significant part in the outcome, but they are so thoroughly fused together that the three-fold character of the adjustment may not be recognized. Indeed, it is a common fault, especially when difficulties occur, for either the man or the woman, or both together, to conceive of the relationship as exclusively that of the body or to commit the opposite blunder and consider the emotional and the physical relationship intrinsically antagonistic. Usually when the second of these unfortunate reactions occurs it appears in women who have been so terrifically conditioned as to debase the physical aspects of sex, and this elementary appetite remains dissociated from both thought and feeling so that in spite of strong love a consistent, spontaneous response in coitus becomes impossible.

When the complexity of the sex relation of marriage is recognized it becomes clear that earlier preparation hampers or encourages sex adjustment. If the child's sex growth were handled wisely at the start, problems of sex adjustment in marriage would be extremely rare. It is just as clear that no one can go back and undo the mischief that unwise conditioning has brought to his sex character, but that he must achieve happiness in spite of such obstacles or fail. There is some question how far the individual can go in successfully interpreting without the aid of the psychoanalyst the meaning of his

own sex history, but there is no doubt that it is an advantage to realize that sex attitudes and traits have a history and do not spring forth spontaneously as a result of the magic of the marriage ceremony.

No other like enterprise is entered upon with such meager preparation as marriage. Even yet the great majority of young men and women who marry have scant information regarding those matters that concern their happiness. The advantage of pre-marriage knowledge is not open to question. The testimony of those who have investigated successful marriages is in accord with the conviction of marriage consultants that sex adjustment is helped measurably by a frank effort to understand the problems involved. Nevertheless, valuable as is this gathering of information, there is something else of even greater importance. The basic need for an auspicious start in matrimony is the profound conviction of both man and woman that what they are entering upon is a mutual partnership, a coöperative undertaking to which each must contribute and which must prove for the advantage of both persons. Failure to recognize this in practice is of all things most disastrous in starting the marriage career.

In spite of love and an intense desire to make the other individual happy, it is not uncommon for a lurking selfishness, which has become a habit trait of the individual, to block coöperation. Instead of the experience being interpreted as mutual, it is actually thought of chiefly from the viewpoint of the individual himself. Mere information regarding sex has no power to change an egoistic attitude. Selfish individuals are hampered in every form of social contact, but nowhere so much as in marriage, and never in marriage with such consequences as at the beginning. Such a statement must not be reacted to as preaching even though it is a favorite theme for sermonizing. It is the literal fact which impresses itself upon any person who becomes familiar with the early difficulties of marriage.

Self-assertive impulses contribute their part to the influences that lead toward mating. If they maintain the upper hand the man or woman becomes incapable of recognizing in practice the mutuality of the partnership. It would be too much to say when this failure occurs that the marriage is always ruined and invariably comes to the divorce court, but it is certain that no one controlled in marriage by self-regard can achieve a high degree of satisfaction or appreciate clearly the deeper meaning of marriage.

Psychiatric literature reveals the multiplicity of expressions that

egoism takes and the ease with which its true colors are concealed from its victim. This greater insight that science has given us in recent years into the inner life of people shows what a supreme test marriage brings and how easy it is for previous attitudes toward life to begin the undermining of the coöperative spirit that is essential to happiness in marriage.

This is one of the facts that give marriage as compared with other human relationships its distinction. It is more than a special form of association. In what it offers and demands it stands alone, a unique relationship. It is a public avowal of the intention of two individuals to attempt the mutualizing of an impulse which on the animal and lower human level is distinctly self-centered. It carries with it also potentially the effort to achieve the intense regard for another's welfare which is characteristic of parenthood. In the long evolution of human mating there has emerged this necessity of the fusion of two separate selves as a prerequisite for even the satisfying of the sex relationship. Probably in the earlier period of man's interest mating was a mere instinct and was periodic as is that of the animal. If so, this stage has long been left behind with the social experiences which passed away during the earlier stages of human culture. Its passing brought the necessity of some sort of enduring relationship which has now turned into the convention of marriage.

The purposes of marriage can no more be restricted to the function of reproduction than they can be regarded as the culmination of an instinct, nor a program of marital relations be laid down merely for the purpose of propagation. However well such a program would fall in with the demands put upon the animal by sex instinct, it is altogether at variance with characteristic human mating, and the construction of a coöperative union exercising sympathy, mutual understanding and affection. Marriage cannot be interpreted as a mere arrangement for physical survival of the race and at the same time be expected to yield the values and satisfactions that modern men and women insist upon getting out of their peculiar relationship.

Every possible variation can be found in human sex experience, and there are those who have held to the belief that sex relations in marriage are morally justified only for the purpose of procreation. Those who have attempted to practice this doctrine, if normally endowed sexually, have found that treating a biological appetite during great stretches of time as a vice has not only caused physical and



nervous tension, but in addition has shackled affection and limited association because their fellowship has proved sexually stimulating. The conflict accompanying such a domestic policy is not recognized as its natural result. Not only does familiar contact awaken sex desire, but mutually satisfying sex experience also deepens and widens the fellowship of husband and wife. Thus the attempt to restrain sex and keep it merely a means for physical survival, as if men and women were subject only to a peculiar physical hunger in their sex desire, has restricted their fellowship and caused its meaning to shrivel.

**Monogamy the norm.** Marriage during the historic record of man has taken various forms and it is apparent that this has resulted from the need of adapting the mating program to the social circumstances. The farther man's sex life travels from its instinctive origin, and the more it comes to include psychic qualities characteristic of mature individuals living in a highly developed civilization, the more secure becomes the monogamic marriage as the norm of matrimonial experience. This does not mean that there is an increasing stress on the rights of possession in marriage or that modern culture by multiplying jealousy strengthens the position of monogamy. It is rather that the meaning of mutuality deepens and it grows less and less easy to distribute promiscuously the conditions required for satisfactory sex relationship, aside from the greater difficulty of establishing affection and fellowship. It is the need, the extent, and the concentration of the mutual fellowship which strengthen monogamy. Any form of plural marriage becomes a hopeless solution of the sex program unless modern men and women reduce the demands they put upon their mating experience, a concession they are not disposed to make.

It would be a false interpretation of this irresistible urge toward monogamic mating to insist that it follows that the ideal happiness becomes easier to achieve. It would seem a more reasonable deduction from the present divorce rate, at least in the United States, that the increasing expectancy that the newly married bring to their undertaking is making domestic success harder to attain. It is doubtful, however, whether any satisfactory basis for comparison with past experience can be found.

The failures seem ever increasing. Judging by the mounting divorce rate it is equally clear that there is a lessening of tolerance in dealing with unsatisfying marriage conditions and at the same time a

stretching of the meaning of happiness. The only safe assertion is that at present many who enter marriage hopefully do not succeed in getting close enough to their monogamic ideals to be content to remain married. Of course, if they had sufficient motive for marrying or for living together aside from their craving for a satisfying monogamic affection, they would be more patient with failure at one point, and for prudential reasons would accept the compensation of economic advantage, parenthood or social status, even though disappointed in their desire for mutual love. But, unfortunately for marriage, as the emphasis upon a satisfying relationship increases there likewise is a decreasing economic and social motive for marrying. No one but the most prejudiced partisan of marriage has any disposition to shy at the facts present in matrimonial failure. No one can be familiar with contemporary life without recognizing that the divorce rate, revealing as it is, by no means measures the quantity or the degree of unhappiness that prevails among married people in the United States. Evidence that marriage success is at present difficult to achieve is widespread and convincing. Sex in marriage has indeed been elevated to its highest point, with insistence upon mutual response, but thus far not without increasing the hazards of failure. It is more reasonable to assume that we are in the process of transition than to insist that men and women cannot increase domestic success unless they bring marriage back to a lower level where less is demanded.

**Sex comradeship.** Nothing more reveals the distinction between human sex satisfaction and that of the animal than the necessity in the human experience of emotional unity. Whether the present difficulties of modern men and women in arriving at this unity are due to the removal of human sex life from the purely instinctive level or whether they are a product of unwholesome instruction and suggestion is an open question. Without doubt even if the former be the real root of the trouble the latter in individual cases greatly increases the impediment to happy adjustment. Not only is there risk of dissociation within the individual who is both attracted to and repelled from sex, but there is likewise the problem of achieving unity in the sex intimacy itself. Although it is this second problem that now concerns us, it must not be forgotten that trouble here not infrequently is the result of inner disturbance which, as soon as sex is encountered, brings in the emotions of one or both of the married partners.

There is ordinarily no substitute for this fusion of self-love through

mutual sex response. The achieving of this is impossible if sex is thought of by either the man or woman as an alien element of affection or something annexed to the personality. It must seem to both man and woman a genuine adjustment attained as an integral part of love. If the man regards the experience as a test of skill in the technique of love-making, a pleasure to be had if he is clever enough to know how to bring it about, emotional unity is defeated, since he exploits sex instead of sharing it. On the other hand, if the woman looks upon the experience as a gift which she offers as a love sacrifice to her beloved or accepts as a serious obligation which she is in duty bound to permit because of her marriage, she also destroys the possibility of concord by her refusal to acknowledge sex desire as an essential element in her love. The former is betrayed by thinking of his love-making as a means to an end while the wife spoils her opportunity by regarding sex as a price to be paid for the love she seeks.

Undoubtedly the principle of relativity shows itself in this problem. The nearer one remains to the earlier primitive experience of man in his sex desire, the less danger there is of any emotional split in the reactions to sex, at least so far as the individual himself is concerned. If, however, the sex life of his partner has advanced to a higher plane as the result of cultural influences and is more complex and demanding in the quality of response, incompatibility is sure to result. Happy adjustment cannot be had unless the simpler one goes forward in his sex development while the more civilized one falls back to a less mature expression of sex. Either of these is difficult, and especially during the high emotional tension of the beginning period of marriage. Not that there is anything inherently hostile to sex in highly developed civilization but rather, with refinement along other lines a corresponding elaboration of sex is unescapable. He who lives a complex life cannot hope to find sex satisfying on a more primitive level than the rest of his experience. By multiplying its possibilities sex has necessarily come to have an increased risk of dissatisfaction and emotional conflict.

No amount of sophistication or skill in the technique of love-making can replace the need of recognizing from the very first of marriage that if sex adjustment is to be had in an emotional unity, it must be in accord with the quality of life characteristic of modern civilization. It is a tribute to the vitality of the sex urge that a tolerable adjustment is so often achieved by those whose childhood conditioning

has forced them to consider sex as something outside progressive character development and a base body appetite.

This false attitude goes so far, at least in the attitude of some women, that they elevate themselves in their moral self-appraisal by offering sex as a gift rather than realizing that it is an experience which they must mutually share and equally value. Knowledge by itself cannot remove the handicap with which these women enter marriage. The reading of some book on sex technique or even the gaining of knowledge by consultation, the mere gathering of facts, unless it leads to a more wholesome emotional outlook upon sex, cannot compensate for an emotional inconsistency when sex intimacy is encountered as a personal experience. These emotionally handicapped women inhibit urges when success is attainable only by complete abandonment. It is the possibility of this wrong start that gives the beginning of marriage such a critical determining influence upon sex compatibility. When trouble does start in sex adjustment at the beginning of marriage, it is common for those who face the difficulty frankly to take it for granted that they are dealing with a problem that is exclusively physical. Without question many times this is true. In other cases their maladjustment is double-rooted, being partly physical and partly emotional. It is, however, unfortunate that so often there is no consideration of the possibility of adverse emotional conditioning, which in cases not a few is the original cause of the unsatisfactory adjustment. Of course, whatever is responsible for the failure, the entire blame is likely to fall upon the sex experience itself, which at times even leads to the conviction of one or both that they are mismatched and can never hope to be happy together.

**The test of compatibility.** Ordinarily sex compatibility is not accomplished in the early days of marriage merely by the fact that the intimacy is pleasurable. On the other hand final failure is not prophesied by the absence of pleasure nor even by the actual experience of pain. A more fundamental question than the nature of the immediate reaction is the significance of these early adventures in adjustment upon the emotional unity of the man and woman, in common speech, the growth of affection. Experience proves that there are women who, starting as unresponding sex partners, in their effort to achieve a more wholesome sex reaction finally change their attitude. Their motive usually is love and this is accompanied with an understanding that their sex deficiency is a misfortune which they should



be rid of as soon as possible, since it mars the complete love they desire. Sometimes nothing more is required than patience on both sides and a repetition of the sex act under more favorable conditions. However, in cases not a few, success cannot come until there is a decided emotional change in regard to sex itself. The fact that so many women confess in confidence that they have gone through such a transformation of sex makes it seem that the unresponsive attitude must be a rather common one and in numerous cases the real cause of unsuccessful marriage. It would be a great advantage if it were more generally recognized that the first test of sex compatibility is emotional in character.<sup>1</sup>

This attainment of mutual sex satisfaction must not be conceived of as something mystic. It is subtle merely because of the complexity of the sex life of modern men and women. This cannot be reduced to simplicity without doing violence to the facts of contemporary experience. For purposes of clear thinking we are wont to separate the sex element from the affection which we place in contrast. Actually in the life of the average man and woman they are one totality and the sex portion less intricate than the other. If it produces more than its proportionate share of conflict, this comes from the attempt to deal with it as something external and different from the love, or else from the hostile and distorted interpretation it gets from adult suggestion made during childhood and youth, in the effort to safeguard the adolescent by suppressing or restraining the impetuous inquisitiveness and responsiveness which the adult fears may do mischief. Attitudes of suspicion towards sex itself rather than ideas of undesirable forms of its expression are built into the growing life with the possibility of wrenching apart sex and affection. In the effort to provide safety for the moment, future dangers are planted in the life.

It is encouraging that so many who come to marriage with conscious or unrecognized aversion to sex develop self-knowledge through their analysis of their childhood and thoroughly consolidate what they have termed the physical and the spiritual comradeship of marriage. Undoubtedly sex is able to testify for itself and to persuade many of those badly prepared for the experience of marriage that, rightly and satisfactorily expressed, sex is not only compatible with love but is itself a part of love.

<sup>1</sup> G. K. Pratt, "Some of the Psychopathology of Marital Maladjustment," *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. IX, No. 5, pp. 861-870.

We have long known the security that comes to the married union from satisfactory sex adjustment. This, however, is too apt to be interpreted as merely the welding of the man and woman by means of a flame of pleasure. In fact, the security lies deeper, otherwise it does not prove enduring. The fusion is accomplished by each feeling that the other seeks sex not as a means of external pleasure but as a communion of self-life, a sharing of affection.

This explains why even among the most fickle the monogamic attitude is, at least temporarily, a sure product of strong feeling. Concentration is inevitable even among those whose mutual attraction is so nearly passion as to burn itself out shortly. In the degree that physical sex is not torn away from the desire for a life-mating, the giving and receiving of love, the desire for monogamic union is continued and increased.

**Sex desire and marriage.** The erotic desire taken by itself is born of human need. Whether we like it or not, man and woman when normally endowed have planted in them powerful urges that have physiological and nervous origin. It is human to desire sex satisfaction, and what we now know as conventional marriage has been developed by social experience to provide satisfaction for one of the strongest and most characteristic of all human cravings. It is true that what was originally instinct, simple and meager, has been greatly elaborated and refined so that, as has just been said, the hunger of most men and most women includes much more than mere erotic satisfaction. It still remains true, however, that these accumulations that have been built into human passion have not in any degree eliminated the need of physical satisfaction. If love as a fellowship makes demands that the sex life has to recognize, the opposite is equally true. The erotic cravings must find in marriage a satisfactory expression or the relationship fails in its purpose and in most instances companionship and love response eventually fail. Sex attraction in its narrow sense does not originate from outside. It is brought forth by a state of body tension biologically established and by the relations of stimulus and response fixed upon some individual member of the opposite sex. This is, of course, not the only outlet that erotic desire can find, for there is the immense field belonging to sex sublimation and sex perversion, each of which represent a departure from the most natural expression of erotic appetite.

The fact that erotic desire is indispensable to true marriage and that

the latter is a social provision for the satisfying of the former, just as the family has come as a means of caring for the helpless child, cannot be overstated. Erotic desire is the basis of marriage and this fact uncovers the desperate mistake of any one entering matrimony with contemptuous thought of sex or emotional hostility to its expression. Indictment of sex or repudiation of its urges is not only an attack on marriage, it is a repudiation of an essential element of human nature. Sex does not need to be elevated into something else after the fashion of those who advocate spiritualizing marriage. It is, rather, a legitimate part of love itself which cannot be expected to fade away to something else but has to be incorporated into the love communion of man and woman. The refinement that it has been given through the long stretches of human culture has in no degree caused an evaporation of its physical or biological constituents. It has been elaborated into greater complexity, but it still remains characteristically physical, a body hunger rivaled in its inherited strength only by the demand of the body for food.

Men and women in the modern world more and more idealize sex, but this is not to be conceived of as a squeezing out of the lower physical to provide room for the higher emotional responses. This idea of higher and lower is itself an attack on the significance of sex and marriage. In the modern world we also have a refinement of cooking which carries us far away from the food habits of the animal or even of the savage. As cooking which burned to a crisp the physical elements necessary for survival would bring starvation, so an effort to idealize sex in such a way as to remove from it native biological urges is merely asceticism in a new form. The building up of emotional attitudes against sex must necessarily bring conflict to any individual who marries with such an interpretation.

It is highly important that this spiritualizing of sex be not regarded as something artificial, an attempt at moral or esthetic interference with the biological structure. Nothing could be more mischievous for happy married life than this misconceiving of fact. The elaboration of sex is itself a product of the nervous complexity that has been built into the body of man as a consequence of influences that have operated during his long evolution. Sex action as a nervous system of stimulation and response is, even in the higher animal, relatively simple and direct. Not so is it with man and woman. The brain, the lower nervous system and various ductless glands are inter-

related in a sex mechanism which forbids the immediacy similar to the more primitive stimulus-response activity on the lower levels.

**The biological organism.** The nervous quality of sex has not been destroyed or decreased by this elaboration, but on the contrary has been strengthened and made more intense. The physical has lost its monopoly by inclusion in the larger whole but it has not because of this undergone diminution. It can no longer dominate attention, for the entire sex equipment of man's organism is involved in marital fellowship. The expansion and diversification of modern man's and woman's sex life reflects a corresponding biological multiplication and refinement of their glands and nerves and brain cells in consequence of the influences that, through the reciprocating adaptation of organisms and environment, has extended the nervous capacity of men and women.

**Man versus woman.** There has been a disposition to interpret this evolution as something that has primarily affected woman rather than man. This notion is reflected in the popular belief still prevailing that man is more strongly sexed than is woman. Not only has this doctrine been accepted by many women but in consequence of it they have come to take a false pride in their belief that they are less susceptible to physical passion and that therefore their love life exists on a higher plane. From the beginning there necessarily have been genuine differences in the sex reactions of men and women on account of their differences in body structure. Any comparison between the two sexes is made difficult by the fact that there is no standard that can be used to measure strength of sex so that one group can be compared with the other, and no means by which differences in quality of sex pleasure can be contrasted. Sex experience, as it is reported to consciousness, is as individual and undefinable as are, for example, sensations of taste or smell. Terms can be applied but they are mere words attempting an objective definition of something each individual must know as his own personal registration in consciousness of a specialized body activity. It is by nature something that he shares with another but this does not mean that the physical experience of the two is identical.

The distinction between male and female is marked by a chasm that cannot be crossed. Even if uncontroversial cases of human hermaphroditism were to be found, testimony from this source could not determine the differences, because such persons would still be too ab-



normal to portray accurately the distinction between the sensations of the normal man and the normal woman.<sup>2</sup>

Science has at least gone so far as to recognize that there is no standard male or female sex character, but such variations between individuals as to suggest that each person is as unique in his sex life as he is as a personality.

In the rough generalization that we now can make between men and women we do have evidence that the male sex reaction is more direct, and that of the woman more diffused. This suggests that the first is the more rapidly stimulated and the other the more slowly because more complex. In actual case history, however, this difference in time proves often to be true only at the outset of marriage. There is another distinction made between men and women which frequently fades away as marriage continues. The man is said to be more conscious of his sex life and more likely to realize the significance of sex stimulation. It is an open question how far this results from marked differences still persistent in the social conventions that act upon the boy and the girl. In spite of unlike conditioning many married women grow as conscious of sex desire and deal with it as frankly as do men. In any case there is nothing to suggest that sex has less significance in the life of the woman than in that of the man, nor that it brings to those who make satisfactory adjustment a lesser degree of physical satisfaction.

The problem is complicated by the temptation women have to make use of sex for ulterior motives. This need not be deliberate, for all that they may consciously recognize is that they are seeking to impress men and win from them favorable response. Actually sex attractiveness becomes the medium of appeal and this is reacted to by the man. Under such conditions the woman may remain ignorant of the strength of the instrument she uses while the man is forced to pay heed to the passion of which he has become conscious. A series of such occurrences may mislead both the man and the woman in such a way as to make their happy mating more difficult. The woman may grow into the habit of using sex as power and may even come to think of it as a possession through which she can at least for a time obtain dominance. The man may get the same impression. This explains why there has been for centuries running through Christian dogma the

<sup>2</sup> M. M. Knight, *Taboo and Genetics*, pp. 61-62.

idea of woman as a tempter. Indeed, the same reaction in a more mystic form can be carried farther back to the fears of primitive men as they encountered what they came to consider the magical power of mana belonging to women.<sup>3</sup>

This conception of woman's sex life as power over the man conceals the truth that it is a form of self-expression in both, attainable only through mutual sharing of experience. It is easy to see how either the man or the woman starting marriage with this false idea at once possesses an attraction to which the other's response becomes a stumbling block in the way of an experience that must be mutual to be emotionally satisfying. There is even greater danger of this mishap when the man enters marriage sophisticated as a result of sex experiences that were made possible by women who made a practice of using sex for power and for profit. However proficient such a man may have become in the technique of getting pleasure, he is unfitted to apprehend the importance of the woman's satisfaction and the limitation of a one-sided, self-seeking coitus.

This has an increasing importance as a result of recent cultural trends which promise to operate still more powerfully in the future than at present. As woman's status has improved through economic independence and new social attitudes, one of the consequences of her emancipation has been a more frank and conscious attention to her sex needs, so that in marriage she expects more than the woman who in former times accepted tranquilly, as a matter of course, subordination in sex as in every other aspect of her life in a civilization of male dominance, and that the modern woman has more to give is unquestionable.

It is her increase in expectation, however, that makes more hazardous any pre-marriage sex experience of the man which betrays him into thinking, according to a common figure, that he is an artist and the woman his instrument. Such a simile is distinctly misleading. Sex satisfaction is an orchestral product in which both man and woman are artists and instruments. Their unison is not a simple melody but a changing complicated harmony to which each simultaneously and, not in an identical manner it is true but with equal significance, profusely contributes.

<sup>3</sup> I. L. Peters, *Taboo and Genetics*, pp. 131-210.

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## CHAPTER XIX

### DOMESTIC ADJUSTMENT

**The meaning of domestic experience.** There is a disposition among those who attempt to prepare for marriage to conceive of the adjustment in too narrow terms. This is reflected in the literature which undertakes to give marriage guidance. It has resulted from the attention that has been given to the problem of sex adjustment. No student of marriage denies the significance of physical sex, but the present emphasis carries with it danger that the complexity of domestic adjustment will be forgotten, and the neglect of other elements in the domestic relationship may even hamper or prevent the achieving of sex compatibility.

For the sake of distinguishing them from sexual adjustment, the other problems of personal relationship which the newly married face are designated in this chapter, domestic adjustment. Marriage, in so far as it means the living together of a man and a woman and the partial consolidation of their interests, becomes something more than a satisfactory physical mating. At a former time the situation could accurately have been described by saying that the two were starting the building of a new family. This now is not always true, since a portion of those who marry in the United States intend from the first not to have children and in so far as they keep to their original program they do not have a full-fledged family experience. This, however, does not mean that their alliance is devoid of problems of adjustment. Their relationship, on the contrary, is without duplication in their previous associations, and although emotionally different than when a family program is assumed from the first, it is not emotionally less significant or less difficult. The very fact that the pair contemplate a concentration upon each other, or at least an avoidance of the supplementing interest brought by children to the orthodox family, leaves them to find in their own contact a basis for satisfaction. They do not meet the problems injected into the family by parenthood but they do have those that are connected with their own peculiar intimacy. Assuming that the sex part of this attains good

adjustment, there still remain the other problems of domestic adjustment.

Ordinarily there must be a break in the ties of former family life. One cannot advance into the new without a change of attitude toward the former family status. Even so axiomatic a fact as this is sometimes emotionally disguised in the attempt both to keep the old and to advance to the new. Immediately the purpose of the marriage is defeated and domestic happiness jeopardized.

Illustrations of this are so commonplace that hardly any adult is unfamiliar with marriage disaster of this type. The case of A. L. is an example of such a matrimonial mistake.

#### *Case 21*

A. L., a young college graduate, upon returning to her home town grew very fond of a business man of her own age, who had come to her city during her senior year and who had already proved himself a man of ambition and business ability. The courtship was rapid, and within the year the two were married. Although the man was doing well in his business, his income was insufficient to give his wife the same standard of living to which she had been long accustomed; her parents being, while not wealthy, comfortably situated and economically secure. They had no other child and were eager to contribute financially to the new household so that their daughter need not feel pinched on account of her husband's inadequate income. They not only continued their allowance which added to his earnings, but they made it possible for her to have a servant to do her work, the kind of clothes to which she had been accustomed, and all the minor luxuries which she had enjoyed at college, and built a new house for the couple on a lot adjoining their own residence.

As time passed it became evident, at least to the husband, that his wife was practically continuing her former status as a member of her parents' family and that he was looked upon as an annexed individual. An independent home life such as he had desired and expected was under the circumstances impossible. For a time he showed patience, assuming that gradually former ties would be broken and that his wife would come to feel the need of a new home, but after three years had passed he began to face the fact that his wife had not changed but if anything had become more tied to her former home. The second establishment was nothing more than an enlargement of her parents' household. During the third year he began to show his resentment in expressions of protest that became stronger and more emotional. His wife accused him of selfishness and jealousy, and even her family began to throw at him his failure to provide for her according to her needs.

Once this was said, he became bitter, and after a violent quarrel she went to her parents' house. The parents took her part, and both the father and mother went to him, accusing him of lack of gratitude and selfish pride. After several weeks of tension during which no progress was made in adjustment, the husband closed the house, sold his business and went to another community, then ceased corresponding with his wife. She accepted the verdict of her parents that he was unworthy of her and in due time obtained a divorce on the grounds of desertion. Neither he nor she has married during the five years that have elapsed.

Upon entering marriage the husband and wife carry over into their new enterprise attitudes born of their experience in the family of their childhood. As they face their new circumstances they are likely to react, because of the past, in one of two ways, either of which hampers their immediate problems of adjustment. Some attempt from the start to duplicate the essential features of their former family life. Either they have so enjoyed it or they have been so dependent upon it that it has become the ideal which they assume they must attempt to imitate. They find it difficult to meet existing circumstances without prejudice, because they read into their present situation conditions that formerly prevailed. If both husband and wife look backward in this fashion, and if they bring to their new relationship opposite or even largely different objectives, it is clear how serious a problem of domestic adjustment they meet from the very beginning of marriage. If differences in opinion arise, they may be utterly blinded as to the source of their trouble, and the very fact that they are emotionally tied to what they consider ideal family experience makes it extremely difficult for them to understand each other and to compromise their expectations.

There is another result, equally troublesome, which comes from the opposite reaction to past family experience. Those who have been extremely unhappy during childhood or youth may construct an ideal marriage relationship which will be merely a rebound from their own experiences. Often a part of their motive in marrying is to have an opportunity to realize their daydreams. They also are anchored in the past, even though it is in substance the exact opposite to their expectations in marriage. Upon meeting any opportunity to work out their ideals they are impelled by their emotions, generated in childhood, and, according to the strength of their feeling, are more or less unable to cope with existing circumstances.

At the beginning of domestic adjustment tension may come about at another point as a result of differences in husband and wife because they are not in the same proportion domestic. This is also chiefly the result of past experience and has perhaps more to do with habit life than with emotional reaction. One has been accustomed to be much at home, to enjoy family activities and to utilize in full the opportunity provided by the home; the other has never had family life and has gone outside for activity and recreation. The husband and wife may be widely separated in the strength of domestic inclinations but they may not discover this before marriage and may not even at the beginning of marriage realize the cause of some of their concrete difficulties.

The boy is less likely than the girl to develop strong domestic inclinations, but although this is common, it must not be thought of as always true. There is no sex trait which guarantees that the male will desire less home life than his wife. He may ask for more and she may from the start interpret this as selfishness on his part and unwillingness to let her live the normal human life which she interprets in a way that makes it necessary for the family experience to be reduced to small terms. The author of *Black Laughter* introduces us to a marriage tension which is at least largely due to this difference of desire between husband and wife. The husband cannot understand his wife's indifference to homekeeping, and in a moment of bitterness and disgust he leaves the apartment which had become the symbol of his disappointment and goes away from the community determined to ignore the marriage relationship which had lost all of its substance.

Home is not a place, it is a habit-life.<sup>1</sup> What we call domesticity is a habit that has come forth from association in the former family experience. Sometimes those who have been denied family satisfaction seek in marriage to obtain that which they have missed. Their very poverty of family experience may have so stimulated desire that, given opportunity, they reveal profound cravings for home-life.

Although marriage adjustment is a special form of human relationship, with peculiar characteristics, it shares the general features that belong to all forms of personal association. The Binkleys have discussed in some detail the five qualities belonging to a personal rela-

<sup>1</sup> V. F. Calverton and S. D. Schmalhausen, *The New Generation*, p. 396.



tionship.<sup>2</sup> The association is non-transferable, variable, continuous, free, and comprehensive. It is also highly emotional in proportion as emphasis is placed upon the personal aspect of the relationship. These characteristics are especially applicable to domestic experience. In domestic adjustment they reach supreme expression, and it is this that makes the association distinctive.

As in all contact the interactions show mutual response. In this process of interaction the family, according to Professor Burgess, gets its meaning.<sup>3</sup> He does not mean that the family alone is a unity of interacting personalities, since this is true of any continuing, emotional association, but rather that it is in this feature that we must find the significance of the family as a living, reacting social group. The same idea is applicable to marriage relationships broadly conceived as the process of domestic adjustment. So long as these personal reciprocal reactions continue to occur, marriage is a vital experience whether expressed in happiness or discontent, in satisfactory or unsatisfactory adjustment.

**Breaking family ties.** Passing reference has been made to the fact that in starting a new domestic life there must be a breaking away from former family experience. This means that there is a call for a new attitude, a subordinating of and to some extent an aloofness from the home of one's childhood. It does not mean, however, except in few and extraordinary cases, that either the husband or the wife has so thoroughly severed connection with the past that no influence from the latter appears in the new relationship. Emotionally such a separation is not possible. Even when with the marriage there is a complete breaking of communication with the former home, its influences persist and seldom are they merely remnants from the past.

It is clear that even when distance and decision erect a barrier between the new home and the old, there still come forth from former domestic experience substantial influences that operate upon the new. What happens is that the two experiences are defined as independent clusters and allegiance is ordinarily given to the second and withdrawn from the first. When for any reason this concentration of loyalty is impossible, either because of persisting obligations or because of the inability of husband or wife to make the emotional departure required, conditions are furnished for emotional conflict

<sup>2</sup> R. C. and F. W. Binkley, *What Is Right with Marriage*, Chap. 4.

<sup>3</sup> E. W. Burgess, *Family*, March, 1926, p. 5.

that creates exceptional difficulties in the process of domestic adjustment.

It is important to notice that the mere having lived away from home is no satisfactory test of whether or not the individual has actually severed home ties in the way that is needed for the building of a satisfactory marriage relationship. In spite of having passed through the state of homesickness that announces a crisis in the individual's dependence upon the family, there may still exist an emotional idealization, a fixation on the parent or identification with a member of the family that has not been eliminated but merely removed from its place of origin. There still remains a habit-disposition which will surely come over into the new experience and complicate the process of domestic adjustment. The problem is not one determined by the length of time one has been away from home or the distance of separation or the infrequency with which one returns to the former home, but by the degree of independence and social integration that has been attained.

**Inadequate preparation for break.** It must not be supposed that the influence of home life as it operates upon the child is always antagonistic to the building of adult domestic adjustment. The reason why this is so commonly believed is the frequency with which we find parental influences operating against the domestic success of the child. Naturally domestic tension attracts more attention than does successful adjustment, and when we find difficulty we commonly see that the parents are in some degree responsible.

Theoretically the happy, contented home might be expected to establish in children a desire for their own marriage and a foundation for its success. In practice we find at times that the result is just contrary to what we would expect, because the affection of the family has been used to limit the child's independence and self-confidence. There remains in the child a tendency to cling to the parent and not always can this habit be transferred to the husband or wife and taken away from mother or father. At other times this fixation on the parent or on the childhood home may be sufficient to prevent marriage taking place. The unhappy family, although it offers less temptation for fixation, may prove equally mischievous by taking away the courage to marry or building complexes of fear that will appear and hamper adjustment just as soon as the domestic contacts start.

The patriarchal type of family operating under American social conditions is especially liable to weaken the resources upon which the child's later domestic adjustment depends. Theoretically we are supposed to have rid ourselves of this type of family life, but as a matter of fact it still exists, particularly among immigrant families in the city, Negroes of the South, and rural families living in comparative isolation. It is, however, found in all classes, and when unsupported by the prevailing mores it suggests, as Dell states, that the father has found his marriage unhappy and has adopted sternness in his relation with members of his family as compensation for the satisfaction denied him in his mating experience.<sup>4</sup> He has developed love of power as a substitute for happiness in love and as a result he seeks to subordinate the child and keep him under strict discipline. As a consequence the latter is denied opportunity to make the emotional growth required for an easy entrance into marriage adjustment.

The mother also seeks to keep the child subservient to the family but not so much for self-assertion as to provide a satisfying personal relationship to take the place of her unfulfilled expectations of happiness in mating. The one replaces love desire by power and the other tries to build up a compensating relationship. In either case the child suffers most by being given a faulty preparation for his later marriage.

From another point of attack the inadequate family may work against the domestic career of its children. The husband may carry into his new domestic setting a craving for the mother, so that with infantile motives he seeks to find in his wife the qualities to which he responded as a child. The wife in her turn may be making the same reaction to her husband whom she has married with the hope of repeating the relationship she formerly had with her own father. Whether one or both of the matrimonial partners are emotionally infantile in the motives that have brought them to matrimony, their adjustment is bound to prove a trial if not in the end a tragedy.

#### *Case 22*

O. T. had been from boyhood subjected to a mother fixation; his father had died when he was yet an infant and upon him his mother poured her love. She was a woman of strong character, and as he developed she persisted in commanding his life. Everything he did of consequence was ac-

<sup>4</sup> Floyd Dell, *Love in the Machine Age*, p. 100.

cording to her advice, and he had never left his home town because his mother felt that he should not be away from home. So he went through college, living with her and permitting her to dominate his life. In the community their relationship was often spoken of as an ideal example of fellowship of mother and son. Soon after graduation he met a young woman in whom he became very much interested and whom he eventually married, with the consent and advice of the mother. His mother agreed to the marriage but on condition that the married couple live with her. This they both consented to do.

They were not married long before friction began to arise between the mother and the daughter-in-law. The wife resented the mother's insistence that she should be consulted regarding any important matter. Soon the wife was convinced that the mother was infringing upon their marriage rights. Once trouble started it increased rapidly and the attempt at dominance on the part of the mother grew more and more aggressive.

Finally, as a result of a rather trivial difference of opinion between the two women, the son was forced to make a decision. He defended his mother, and his wife within a few hours left the home, stating that she would never come back until she was promised a house of her own and freedom from interference. The wife and husband corresponded and occasionally met, but the former persisted in refusing to come back to live with her husband until he had made the break upon which she insisted.

More than a year passed before he was able to meet his wife's ultimatum. Toward the end of the period he had sought counsel regarding his domestic difficulty and had been given a frank interpretation of the root of the trouble. Eventually he agreed to move away from his mother's home, whereupon the wife returned. Once he escaped his infantile fetters he grew rapidly in self-reliance and in loyalty to his wife. Little by little the mother became reconciled to a situation against which she could make no headway and accepted what she could not change. She realized that her son was happier, and at present all three, husband, wife, and mother, appear happy and coöperative.

**Domestic experience a growth.** Domestic adjustment is not attained by mere power of will. However strong the determination to build a harmonious, mutually satisfying relationship, progress has to be made through experience. However well acquainted husband and wife may have become before the marriage, they find themselves after the wedding engaged in the building of a familiarity quite unlike anything that has preceded. It is the constancy of association and the mutual commitment to a common enterprise that gives a new complexion to their association. They begin to know each other and



to adjust to each other's personalities under the ever-changing testing of familiar contact. There must be not only continuous adjustment to each other but each must also adjust former idealization to the flesh and blood personality that is now beginning to make itself known.

During courtship there has been a disposition to put aside traits that have seemed undesirable or that have been unwelcome as they appeared in the process of association, but this can not now be carried out, at least to its previous completeness. The realities force themselves forward and adjustment has to be made, not to the picture the husband or wife has constructed of the other, but to the living person. It is not a question whether the self is more or less than that created by fancy, it is rather that if happiness is to be had the adjustment must be genuine and each person must be dealt with as he or she exists. Of course, there may be emotional protest against this and even a stubborn unwillingness to accept the facts. If so, daydreaming continues, but it is not the prolonging of courtship but a concealment of existing facts by placing over the new relationship a fiction that can only bring self-deception to him or her who insists upon it. Adjustment is delayed and possibly forever prevented.

The process may be interpreted as new discoveries which are emotionally accepted even when they are at variance with what was expected, or the situation may be regarded as something that has violated the love program. In the latter case the man or the woman who is emotionally tied to infantile reactions will bring up former ideals and contrast them with the realities that seem antagonistic. Blame will not be put upon the self for magically creating a personality of one's own fancies, but the other person will be held responsible for a disappointment which takes away hope of happiness. It is clear that if adjustment is to be had it must be on the basis of actual personal traits, but it is just as obvious that if the over-use of fancy has led one couple into trouble, in another instance the failure of husband or wife to come up to reasonable expectations is the cause of equal disaster under opposite circumstances.

**Experimental rather than conventional adjustment.** Since the beginning of the present century social conditions have had a disturbing effect upon domestic traditions and have loosened the patterns that in the past so largely regulated the behavior of husband and wife. As a consequence of this the newly married must, if successful in marriage, make an adjustment more individual than used to be necessary,

but they have the advantage of being freer from the dominance of fixed social patterns than were their predecessors in marriage. Because of this more is placed upon their own initiative. Thus their relationship is to a large degree experimental rather than an attempt to follow a well-beaten pathway. Denied the guidance furnished by long-established social patterns, they set up for their goal personal ideals which when analyzed appear to be largely individual desires and expectations.

The husband and wife both bring to their mating their own demands, unmitigated as once would have been true by the realization that personal desires must be compromised if not subordinated in order to carry out the rôles assigned by society for the husband and the wife. This lessening of the force of social patterns encourages self-desire in mating so that more adjustment is called for than formerly would have been necessary. In addition to this clash which comes from greater consciousness of personal expectation and more insistence upon self-satisfaction, there may also be need of adjusting because of differences between the husband and wife in their reaction to such social patterns as still have influence. These attitudes may range from a conservatism that duplicates the training received in childhood from the parents to the most radical theories of sophisticated and matrimonially rebellious individuals in our largest cities. Not only are differences between husband and wife liable to appear, they may come to the surface unexpectedly and each member of the union may feel that the other has been lacking in frankness in concealing such dissimilarity.

Any generalization as to the characteristic reactions of the two sexes must be made cautiously. One gets the impression, however, that it is the woman who is more likely to realize the disturbance that has come to the social pattern while the man is more apt to think in terms of the experiences of his parents. This distinction is less true in courtship than in the after-marriage experience. The man often seems to suppose that although the courtship relationship is greatly different from that in vogue during the youth of his parents, a similar variation is not to be expected after the wedding.

It seems as if the man often favors courtship changes because they bring him a greater freedom which he likes, but that he has little zest for variation from the domestic pattern to which he was accustomed in his own childhood. The woman is more conscious of the

transition through which we are still passing and has more thoroughly adjusted her domestic program to the changes that are occurring. In many cases the philosophy of the man appears to be that courtship is the period when both sexes should be modern, but once it is passed there should be a settling down. To put it differently, the man would take advantage of the lessening of social control during the experimental period of courtship, while the woman seriously attempts to build an ideal domestic program in accord with her new status and her desire for permanent affection.

There is no consistent difference between men and women, but the situation encourages the woman to be more sensitive than the man to changes taking place, because these have operated to influence women more than men, and after marriage as well as before she is forced to take them into account in a way the man does not need to do. Since the husband's or wife's reaction to the domestic patterns that society still supports, he leaning toward the traditions and she aligning herself with the facts, are built into the expectations that each brings to the marriage, adjustment between the two is made necessary and to the degree that compromise does not occur, a basis for conflict is established which may grow more intense as marriage settles into a routine, particularly if parenthood becomes an added incentive to emotional separation between the two.

Woman is more adrift than man at present on account of the larger break in the social patterns that concern her. She also has more at stake in any settlement of domestic policy, for nearly always the man is freer from the responsibilities of the home.

**Adjustment to reality.** The idea of adjusting to reality is a favorite expression in psychiatric literature which usually is applied to the training of children. It is not interpreted, however, as something pertaining only to childhood, for it is a fundamental reaction to life itself and therefore appears whenever there is any crisis that forces the individual to reveal his genuine self. Marriage adjustment is necessarily a crisis experience in the careers of most of those who enter matrimony. It is, therefore, likewise a testing of the ability to adjust to reality. It is true that the unmarried man or woman who finally realizes that he or she is committed to single life also has to adjust to reality, but in the latter case accepting the facts is more likely to mean surrendering opportunity to achieve the ideal while the marriage necessitates a reconstruction of the ideal or a surrender

of it in disappointment. The former facing of reality is also usually sharper in its intensity than the other, since it is not a drifting process but an act that must be done quickly and consciously.

No one familiar with the difficulty human nature always has in accepting a situation contrary to the one desired will consider it strange that there is protest in marriage against the facing of unwelcome facts. Sometimes the marriage itself has been largely motivated as a means of escaping from reality and to find that this has not been accomplished but that instead a more severe test has been placed upon the individual naturally evokes strong feeling.

The reality to which the married man and woman must be adjusted is not something stationary so that by one distinct willful effort victory may be had and no more strain be felt. Instead it is an intermittent experience, for the reality to which one must conform is itself in process of change as a result of the contact of the man and woman in marriage. The growing older, the decrease or increase of sex energy, the effect of domestic routine, differences in economic income and financial security, the coming or not coming of the child, differences in parenthood experience due to the changing ages of children, the fading of interest in business or profession, or the increasing commitment to it on the part of the husband, are some of the influences that from time to time act upon the existing situation to prevent its being fixed in character. Instead of a single, permanent reality, what we find is a series of realities and the husband's or wife's adjustment to any one of these may be more difficult than to anything that has preceded.

A portion of the reality to which the husband and wife must make adjustment in successful marriage is the disposition of the other which is itself in a continuous process of change. The tragedy that comes when husband or wife outgrows the other is commonplace. It is a favorite theme of the drama and of the novel. Differences in intellectual or emotional maturity are not the only separations between husbands and wives that require new adjustment. Changes in health, in body vigor, in the amount and the use of leisure, in moral idealism, concentration upon some exterior activity, such as that of the successful business man or the ambitious woman, which competes with the domestic fellowship, are other common causes of separation between husbands and wives.

To have good adjustment there must be the habit of accepting the



realities rather than, as is so often thought, one heroic facing of the facts during the early period of marriage. Often reality is unacceptable because imagination builds substitutes so far superior to existing facts that the personality recoils against giving up abundant hope and accepting the meager life of facts. It is well to notice that sometimes in marriage the collision is due to the opposite tendency. The husband or wife finds it hard to come down to a reality which exists merely because the partner in marriage pitches expectation and idealization so low.

**Exaggeration of the new experience.** The loyalty of love covets an opportunity to prove itself. Unless this impulse is curbed by judgment it may in the early period of marriage encourage a policy of sacrifice distinctly detrimental to wholesome adjustment. The husband or wife may assume an unselfishness that can be continued only at the risk of self-suppression, and which may almost force upon the other some form of egotism. One mistake that may be used as an illustration is for the wife to withdraw from all her former friends or from her out-of-the-home interests in order to concentrate upon her husband or the home. She establishes as the family program a policy most unfair to herself which can only be carried out by sacrifices that have no basis in reason. It is a costly form of loyalty, because this suppression of self lessens the value of one individual for the other.

### *Case 23*

The career of J. T. reveals the danger of a wife starting marriage determined to put aside her interests and find happiness in catering to the husband. She married a minister who had recently come from a theological seminary into her community. He had been a good deal of a recluse during his educational preparation and on account of this had never learned the art of adapting himself to others. He had a genuine love for his wife and she was devoted to him, altogether too much so as events proved. She entered the parsonage determined that she should make him and his career the one motive of her life. In practice this meant that she had to assume more and more of his pastoral responsibility, allowing him to protect himself against the realities until even his sermonizing grew feeble because of his aloofness from life. She grew old more rapidly than he and nervously less stable on account of the burden she carried, for from the beginning she had protected him from household responsibility including no small problem of financing.

Instead of advancing in his profession the minister found it difficult to hold the churches he got, as his reputation as an impractical, self-centered

man became more widely established. The wife had no inkling as to the part she had played in spoiling his career. She merely blamed the people and spent herself increasingly for his comfort and success. The fact was, and it would have been startling could it have been realized by either husband or wife, that his parishioners grew fond of her and grew to feel that she was the more useful of the two. At present he ministers to a small rural congregation, thoroughly dissatisfied, while his wife continues to carry a load that grows heavier and heavier.

**Influence of in-laws on domestic trends.** The importance of the rôle assumed at the commencement of marriage is in the effect it has upon the other member of the union. Sometimes the real complication comes from permitting the in-laws to assume after the marriage a position that they cannot safely be allowed to maintain. The husband or wife may recognize early the danger of the dominance the in-laws assume, but for the sake of peace may postpone any collision, expecting that time will solve the problem. Often it does; sometimes it does not. It is doubtful whether it is good strategy to evade the issue under such circumstances in the first days of marriage. The rôle assumed at the start is difficult to draw away from, at least without a break much more serious for domestic security than if it had come at the commencement of marriage.

#### *Case 24*

The young man and woman married at 22 and 21 respectively. They built a home, began housekeeping, and had a child in the second year. The construction of the house would have been delayed had not the parents subsidized the two young people. The parents lived only a block away and continued an intimacy and a subtle interference with the young people that had begun as soon as they returned from their honeymoon. For five years the young people lived together, seemingly happy, although constantly they both reacted somewhat against the interference of the wife's parents. Little by little the grandparents concentrated on the child. They bought his clothes, often persuaded him to live at their house, and were persistent in giving advice to the parents and interfering with their discipline of the child.

The boy, as a result of his grandparents' influence, began to be somewhat precocious. This delighted the grandparents and they had the child segregated from those of his own age and privately tutored, until at ten years he had reached the level of the eighth grade in his studies. He was a spoiled and unhappy child, unable to adjust either to those of his own age or to the older boys who were on his intellectual level. The father

of the child grew increasingly dissatisfied. At first his wife took his part, but as he expressed more frankly an objection to the grandparents' interference, she began to defend them and to quarrel with him. Estrangement grew, ending finally in a divorce. The grandparents at once adopted the child by legal procedure. The man sold his home and business and moved away. His wife returned to her parents but was not content. After a year or two spent mostly in travel she married again. Her parents were opposed to this second marriage. It proved to be an unfortunate one, and for a second time she sought divorce and went back to her parents.

Her first husband never remarried, and although he was industrious and well thought of in the community to which he had gone, his business went down hill rather than up, and at present in this family tragedy the grandparents alone are content. The husband believes, and he is probably right, that his grave mistake was in not protesting immediately when the grandparents began to meddle with his home, and especially when they attempted to regulate the life of the child.

Often when there is trouble from the in-laws, jealousy is at the bottom of the difficulty. When this is true, an elaborate rationalizing process occurs which conceals the actual situation from the superficial observer.

One of the strangest expressions of parental jealousy is that of the father of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who was opposed to the marriage of all his children.<sup>5</sup>

**Happiness demands growth.** So much emphasis has been placed upon the necessity of making wise adjustments in the early stages of marriage that there is risk of forgetting that this ability to adjust to existing circumstances must be continuous throughout the living together of husband and wife. Ordinarily it is true that great crises appear at the commencement of marriage. This, of course, is not always the fact. In any case domestic happiness depends upon a changing but growing affection. The relationship of the man and the woman is constantly altered by the changes which time and association bring in the personality of each.

Growth of character is desirable and is a normal product of satisfactory domestic adjustment. The adjustment itself has to be constantly more mature to keep pace with the character changes of the developing husband and wife.

A domestic policy that fails to protect the individuality of either

<sup>5</sup> See Rudolph Besier, *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*.

member of the union lessens growth and may even lead to deterioration of personality. When the husband or wife submerges himself or herself in the personality of the other, conditions of growth are destroyed. Domestic adjustment, as the term suggests, is coöperative. It is not accomplished by annihilating the independent existence of either husband or wife. To guard against the risk of failing to make independent growth there must be from the beginning of marriage a recognition of the need of privacy in the experience of both members of the union, a privacy rigorously respected by the other. The temptation to share everything until no private life remains must be resisted because it leads to an infantile type of affection rather than to a mature and enduring love.

This, of course, should not be interpreted as justifying egotistic isolation. Domestic adjustment is not to be had if either individual selfishly separates himself or herself, refusing to enter team play. In good adjustment the union provides opportunity for private existence which enhances the coöperative enterprise. Failure to adjust comes from concentration on self-interest which excludes any recognition of the rights of the other.

#### *Case 25*

A. and F. were married ten years ago. His age was 26 years and hers 21. Both of them had been extremely popular among their acquaintances and had enjoyed social prestige in their community. Their mutual attraction was generally considered natural and fortunate, and their friends and relatives took it for granted that they would be most happily married. He was already beginning to do well in business. His salary was such that there was no financial problem involved, and so far as outward circumstances showed they were both very happy for the first two years.

No children were born, and after two years people began to notice that they were not so often together, and soon it was recognized that they were not happy. During the fifth year of their marriage they separated. They have never been divorced because of religious scruples, but to all intents and purposes they are permanently separated.

The man had a genial personality and made up to everybody with whom he came in contact. He was always ready with a smile and his manner was shrewdly flattering. He was aggressive but seldom encountered opposition because of the manner in which he pushed himself forward. He saw to it that self-interest was never forgotten, but his tactics rarely called attention to his selfishness. The wife had been equally popular in her set,



but her disposition was very different. She was more reticent and won by her charm and her genuine friendliness. She was not jovial but she wore well because she never seemed vain, jealous or anxious to impress people. In spite of her quiet manner she was a person of character and had a strong sense of the rights of the individual.

More and more after marriage the man's aggressiveness was undisguised in his home life, and from it his wife recoiled. There was no child toward whom she could turn for compensation, and gradually, quietly, but firmly she rebelled against making herself her husband's servant, a mere instrument for carrying out his purposes. Her attitude surprised and vexed him, and finally during one of their more spirited clashes he exploded in anger, insisting upon her acquiescence. Her reply was an indictment of his selfishness, and from that time his feeling toward her was one of hate while her reaction was one of hopelessness. They tried living together merely to prevent confessing publicly their failure, but their dislike grew to such proportions that they had to separate.

**Results of failure of domestic adjustment.** Inability to make adjustment in matrimony is reflected from the focus of incompatibility to other points of contact in the relationship. Thus sexual dissatisfaction complicates other phases of domestic adjustment. In a similar fashion maladjustment as it has been interpreted in this chapter operates upon sex life. Domestic difficulties never remain in the sphere where they occur.

What makes domestic failures serious is the effect they have on the personality of those concerned. As a result of unhappiness the unadjusted personality releases its emotion in other situations and in dealing with other people than those within the family. The employer of labor, the teacher, the man of business, the practicing parent, for example, all act differently and less wisely because of inner protest brought forth by their domestic dissatisfaction. Even health may be injured by domestic unhappiness. Children brought up in a home where incompatibility exists, even though every effort is made by both parents to protect them, are certain to be hurt. The chief consequence of domestic incompatibility is its risk of destroying a wholesome outlook upon life. Everything human is interpreted on a lower level and enthusiasm, hope, and love are regarded as natural but elusive dreams destined to crumble once they encounter the realities of life. It is the rare individual who carries the wear and tear of domestic disappointment and escapes social pessimism.

**Objective assistance.** Failure to achieve domestic adjustment is often not so inevitable as it seems. The fact is that disaster comes from ignorance, especially lack of self-knowledge, which in many instances would clear up if properly treated. It is too much to expect that those who are in the throes of trouble will themselves always clearly see the way out or have the courage and the incentive to follow their clew. We have child guidance clinics which are now dealing not only with the problems of children but with the more fundamental causes of these problems in the parent. There is need of the same sort of objective assistance for those troubled in their domestic relations.

**Suppression of conflict not adjustment.** The mere absence of stress between husband and wife does not denote that they are making satisfactory adjustment. The question is, What accounts for their lack of conflict or their freedom from stress? It may be that they have not reached an equilibrium but that one has so thoroughly surrendered to the requests of the other that there is no possibility of clashing. This type of family concord was often found in the patriarchal family of the past, and it still lingers in the United States in isolated rural sections and among some immigrants of the first generation. It cannot be said that the woman is always unhappy since she takes as a matter of course the traditional attitude of members of her sex, but her subordination of self offers no ideal for the modern married woman. The woman who has in any degree achieved independent personality when she marries cannot without crushing herself assume constant subservience to her husband.

It is not the clashing of separate interests that destroys domestic happiness, but the continuing intense clashing which is never by compromise and discussion brought to a settlement. Constant quarreling and no merging of differences of opinion are evidences of failure to accomplish domestic adjustment.

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## CHAPTER XX

### ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT IN MARRIAGE

**A basic relationship.** The economic adjustment of husband and wife is fundamental in their relationship. With marriage each enters a new economic status which most nearly resembles a business partnership. Whatever may be their personal economic status or their agreement regarding money matters, by marriage they enter upon a new economic relationship which requires adjustment just as certainly as does sex. This is recognized by law, which attempts to lay down principles to guide decisions in cases of serious controversy. Success or failure in working out a mutually satisfying and wholesome money program is reflected in all the other contacts of husband and wife, and unquestionably there arises among modern men and women a considerable amount of incompatibility because of domestic friction due to finances.

Adjustment along economic lines is as certainly complicated by prevailing social conditions as is that of sex. There are three relatively recent changes in the general attitude of women that make the problem of financial adjustment greater than it once was. Many women bring to their marriage experience in the earning and spending of money which has come to them through regular employment under the same industrial and professional status as that of men. They are accustomed to the making of their own individual money decisions and have developed habits and standards of expenditure just as have their husbands. Modern women also have for the most part attained economic independence before their marriage and therefore enter matrimony with very different attitudes from those characteristic of women who have never known anything else than economic dependence. In the third place most American women have a very firm conception of economic justice in the relationship of husband and wife. Their demands are more definite, more exacting, and possibly more individualistic than were those of their mothers and especially those of their grandmothers.

As a consequence of these social changes matrimony does not pro-



vide any ready-made solution which automatically comes because the man has entered upon the status of husband and the woman upon that of wife. There has to be a genuine and more or less deliberate adjustment, often a compromise between conflicting ideals and expectations. Opportunities for friction or misunderstanding or downright hostility are many, and rather often, as in the case of the sex relationship, the adjustment has to be made rapidly, at the very start of marriage when experience is least and mutual understanding weakest.

#### *Case 26*

Mr. T. is a man about thirty-five years of age, and his wife is four years his junior. On the surface they seemed to be living a normal happy family life, but inside their home things were quite different. There was friction at every point and few were the hours of actual happiness for either of the couple. To a close observer this incompatibility was at times evident. To friends and relatives it had long been known. They have one child who is now ten years old and who was born in the first years of their married life. They are both very fond of this child, but he is at present a boy in whom they cannot take just pride. The trouble between the T.'s started at first over money. The husband suddenly found out that his wife had been drawing a considerable amount from their checking account without his knowledge. When he asked her for an explanation the two had an open quarrel and from that time began to drift apart until at last they separated. After marriage the husband spent little time at home, taking it for granted that his wife was reconciled to his lack of domestic interest, that caring for the house was her responsibility and should be for her a means of sufficient satisfaction. He was an ambitious lawyer, fond of society, and constantly seeking to advance his success. He was highly intellectual in comparison with the wife who was equally social but lacking in personal ambition.

When first they married the couple had seemed well adapted to each other. They were of the same social standing in their town and had gone through high school together. Four years later they began their married life after a year's engagement. At that time Mr. T. was working hard to pass the bar examination and was finding himself intellectually. In his concentration he gave little thought to encouraging his wife to advance with him intellectually but put more and more of the family responsibility upon her. Gradually the intellectual separation between the two grew greater until it became apparent to both of them. The husband thought of his wife more as his housekeeper than as his partner. She grew to feel

that the money he gave over to her was rather a payment of his debt for her services than a coöperative sharing of income.

This was the fundamental cause of their financial quarrel. Mr. T. felt that his steadily increasing monthly income was surely the result of his own individual effort, while his wife resented his interpretation of their relationship. She also found that she did not have enough spending money to carry on freely the kind of social life she desired. She compared her situation with that of other women and decided that she was unjustly treated. Instead of insisting upon more spending money, which her husband could well have given her, since his income was rapidly increasing, Mrs. T. chose to avoid any discussion and merely drew checks without informing her husband of her procedure. For a time she covered up what she was doing by explaining that the money went for unexpected household expenses, but she grew confident through success and increased the number of such checks and their amounts until it was impossible for her to conceal from her husband that the money had been going for personal accounts, and when he grew suspicious she confessed and insisted that she was within her rights. Mr. T. protected himself by taking from her the power to draw her own checks, and when the bank refused to pay out cash on the first check she presented, she grew furious. From that moment their union hung on a slender thread, and after a few stormy months they separated, by mutual consent, and the woman went back into business, while the son spent most of his time at private schools and summer camps.

**Social changes that influence economic adjustment.** Attention has already been called to changes in the experience of the average American women that complicate economic adjustment in marriage. These changes are merely a few of the many new conditions that operate in producing a marriage situation extremely uncommon in the past, if ever it was duplicated. The emergence of modern industry has largely destroyed the household unit which for so long was a major-producing organization. There are still in America households that act as producing organizations, but they are rare and are mostly found among immigrants of the first generation, people living in rural sections, or in other families that are the victim of great isolation. Efficient as the household has been during the long stretches of human evolution, the coming of the machine brought it a competitor to which it has gradually surrendered more and more of the household tasks. By taking production outside of the house, modern industry

forced the husband to break away from the former economic unit and earn his living by entering a larger, more efficient and more impersonal organization.

Even when the housewife has not followed her mate out into wage employment, her occupation has been changed. It cannot be justly said that she does not produce, since her labor is expended as a general rule in carrying on household services and using material in the rôle of homekeeper, but she does not usually spend time in producing articles that are exchanged or offered for sale as was common when the household was a unit of production. A great part of her present task has to do with consumption rather than with production, and this encourages the notion that the husband earns and the wife spends. There is opportunity for discord in proportion as the man regards his income as his exclusive possession from which he is free to contribute or not according to his choice, and in proportion as the wife is ambitious, self-assertive, and has had in times past high earning power herself.

As the household has been so largely deprived of its significance as a producing unit in society, there have also gone on other influences that have created a new American family life with its complicated economic adjustment. As various forms of work have gone outside the family and have been carried on as commercial activities, there has been a corresponding loss of household apprenticeship for the girl. Formal education aiming at artificial attainments for the most part, language, mathematics, and various specialized fields of knowledge, has become the chief occupation of the child and very little attention has been given to the training of girls in the practical management of the household. Fortunately there has developed in education itself a partial substitute for the education that was once given as a matter of course in the home. Home economics built upon different sciences has attempted to offer systematic training to take the place of the experience that was once furnished by the home. Only a part of American girls receive this training in the schools, and in the past the instruction has been too theoretical and formal to be of practical value as compared with that of the girl of pioneering days who, working with her mother, learned how to care for a home.

It is interesting to find that even in the specially favored group studied by Ruth Lindquist, of members of honorary societies of home

economics, more than a third of the entire number investigated declared that they felt the need of more information regarding household management. Evidently even college training had not given them the satisfactory preparation in dealing with the specific problems of the home which they felt they had the right to expect. The author summarizes her findings as follows:

The degree of help which college training provided for homemaking was differently regarded within the group who had four years or more in an institution of higher learning. In some instances the replies were qualified in such a way that it was hard to classify them; in other cases the question was not answered. Very nearly one half of all the graduates believed that the training could have been more helpful, while less than one in ten replied with an unconditional no. In this connection it is interesting to note that but one in three of the graduates with a major other than home economics thought college courses could have been more helpful for homemaking, whereas the ratio for the latter group was approximately one in every two. Whether this comparison points to the recognition of a closer relation between the curriculum and the home in the case of the women who have had home economics training is not clear. The size of the non-home-economics group may be a factor making for the contrast in point of view. One in three indicates that experience in the home is essential for an appreciation of the nature of the responsibilities which homemaking involves. Regardless of the factors that entered into the group opinions there is an expression on the part of a considerable number that college was less helpful in preparing them for homemaking than they believe it might have been.<sup>1</sup>

Sweeping generalization is untrustworthy in judging an educational system that is changing so rapidly and is so differently organized in different localities. Only the specialist who has recent contact with instruction from coast to coast in cities, villages, and country places dares to dogmatize regarding the present situation. It is fair to say, however, that there still exists for many children a school program which takes most of their time during the formative years and neglects to give them any substantial preparation for household responsibility or even any appreciation of what constitutes efficient housekeeping or a just partnership in marriage. The chief function of primitive education and an important part of child training in the former American home has gone by the board and has been replaced by emphasis on in-

<sup>1</sup> *The Family in the Present Social Order*, pp. 89-90.



formation that has far less importance for the average American citizen.

Even in home economics courses, both in public schools and in colleges, there has been stress on the production side of household management, out of proportion to present needs, with neglect of the more salient problems of consumption. No one would deny the need of training in household skills such as the cooking of food, and sewing, but more and more the chief problem of the American wife is the spending of money. She buys, even if living in the country, a great part of the family clothing, and a considerable and increasing part of the food. Her efficiency must more and more depend on her discriminating management of the household budget. The home-keeping of the past has overshadowed the fact that the rapid changes that are going on in contemporary family life are producing a very different type of household management than has ever before been known. In very recent years the actual situation has begun to influence the home economics curriculum.<sup>2</sup>

As a consequence of this realigning of home economics instruction there has developed an opportunity which is still in its infancy to give to the boy instruction regarding family matters which may in some degree make up for the losses that he also has suffered because of the passing of the former American family experience. In this type of instruction there is bound to be great emphasis upon the financial side of family adjustment. There is need of men having a great understanding of the intricacies of financial management of the household. During the frontier and rural type of family life in this country, the household was a spending unit as well as a producing unit, and the husband as a rule had better appreciation of family finances than does the average American young man to-day who comes out of the conventional school or college, enters a business or a profession, and marries. As an example of the recognition of the boy's need, in a course given for senior high school boys at Long Beach, California, the division of instruction which received the greatest length of time was, as one would rightly expect, concerned with adjustment in family finance.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> R. C. Cook, "Money Management and the Home Economics Curriculum," *Journal of Home Economics*, April, 1931, pp. 333-336.

<sup>3</sup> W. Dunn, "Family Adjustment Course in the Senior High School," *Journal of Home Economics*, January, 1931, pp. 12-13.

*Case 27*

The development of the financial policy of the family of R. R. is interesting and in contrast with the program usually adopted in such circumstances. The husband has a moderate but increasing income and the woman, whose gifts have led her into various activities, has not been, except during the first year or two, economical in her household management. She employs a servant, and for the last ten years has not taken complete charge of expenditures. During these years there has been constant difficulty in making the savings that the family income justified. This has been recognized by the wife as well as by the husband, but she has not until lately been able to keep down expenses. Her great fault has been too easy spending and buying in too great quantities, leading to considerable waste and making the servant feel that there was no need of particular care on her part in the use of food material and conservation of supplies. The wife's problem undoubtedly goes back to childhood, for her father could never be made to take money seriously, and his easy-going indifference to finances was imitated by the girl who idealized him.

Finally the husband and wife decided to change their policy regarding the economic responsibility of the family. Mr. R. R. had taken charge of the family income, giving the wife a monthly allowance which she exceeded. Instead of this arrangement, the money is now all turned over to the wife as it comes in, and if the husband needs cash she gives it to him as he had previously been giving it to her. For the first two or three months after this change of policy the bank several times notified the wife that she had overdrawn her account. Little by little she grew more interested in balancing her budget and more careful in expenditures. As a consequence during three years in which she has been entirely responsible for the family finances more has been saved than during the preceding seven years.

**Saving.** Every well-devised budget contains an amount to be used for savings. This has commonly two purposes. One is to prepare for possible emergencies such as illness, unemployment, decrease of salary, the necessity of moving elsewhere, or some other future demand for money that can be met only by preparation before the need arises. Saving proves less a burden than running in debt. It gives a feeling of security and self-respect.

Then there are future needs for money that do not represent unpleasant happenings but rather satisfactions that demand provision in advance. Some of these are travel, new furniture, the buying of a home, education of children, and retirement in later life.

In the colonial period and throughout the history of our nation until very recently the idea of thrift was one of the most characteristic of American traits. All prudent families attempted to accumulate some surplus, but during the present century this tendency has markedly decreased in spite of the fact that there is still an impressive amount of money paid yearly into savings banks in the United States. As society through its government activities has taken over a greater number of responsibilities that used to be distinctly personal, and since this trend still continues, giving the individual a feeling of social protection irrespective of his own personal savings, and since business more and more depends upon rapid and large spending and has less and less need of depending for its capital upon the savings of the average individual, the thrift habits of native Americans have lessened. It is still true, however, that the prudential family saves in proportion to its income.

Newly married people in average circumstances cannot be expected at the start to save much, since a large part of the family income must go toward the starting of the new enterprise. This in itself is in a sense saving, because it is building up household capital. But this accumulation, however valuable to the individuals concerned, has a marketable value very much less than its actual cost and so cannot be thought of as resources for an emergency. It is important that savings start at the very beginning of marriage, that the habit may be formed early and become a definite policy of family expenditures. This habit of saving, once it is formed, becomes an habitual part of the family routine the same as paying one's bills or taxes. On the other hand, if it does not begin early, even when savings have to be very small, the family develops a different habit of spending all it earns month by month and even though the income increases, desires increase so that there never seems to be an opportunity to start saving.

It is generally felt by financial experts that the best plan for savings by young couples with moderate income at the beginning of their marriage is either a savings bank deposit or insurance, or preferably both. The savings bank offers opportunity to put a small sum on interest from time to time, is among the safest of investments, and does not require the knowledge necessary in the buying of stocks, bonds and real estate. Over a length of time it usually yields as much in dividends as the ordinary investor can hope to get. There are, however, differences between savings banks, and the depositor should always attempt to discover the safest and most reliable banks in his vicinity.

Safety for him is more important than a high interest rate, although as a rule the banks in a given locality pay the same interest.

Building and Loan Associations, in some sections known as Co-operative Banks, also offer an easy way to save, since deposits can be made weekly or monthly and in very small amounts. These institutions provide funds for the building or purchase of houses, and members who deposit stated sums and receive shares in the organization can use these as security for temporary loans. Dividends continue to be paid on the shares and lower the interest rate of the amount borrowed. There are differences in the management and financial soundness of these organizations and any individual Building and Loan Association should be investigated carefully by the would-be depositors before it is used as a medium for savings. These loan associations are regulated by the laws of the various states and there are differences in the statutes and in the kind of supervision and control they receive.

It is unsafe for the family in moderate circumstances to use savings for speculation. Only after considerable savings have been put in banks, life insurance and similar conservative investments do budget specialists advise the buying of either stocks or bonds, since even though these be bought outright, depending as they do for their selling value upon the future economic situation, they represent some degree of hazard. This, of course, is much truer of stocks than of the bonds of reputable concerns or of state or federal government.

**Life insurance.** It is generally felt by students of the financial problems of families that life insurance is a form of saving that is nearly always desirable and one that should begin at the very first of marriage. Even the straight life insurance policy, which is a contract on the part of the company to pay a stated sum at the death of the insured, is a form of saving in that it provides security for the family in the event of death of the person insured and the subsequent loss of wage or salary, or, in the case of the housewife, of service.

There are various forms of insurance and changes are constantly being made in the contracts offered. There are different types of insurance against death. The endowment type of policy, although it also insures the individual against death during a stated number of years, finally matures and pays a definite amount to the insured. This type of insurance also has many forms. One of these is a straight endowment policy which pays nothing at death but a certain sum after a definite number of years. A joint life policy may be taken by the



husband and wife, payable upon the death of either to the survivor. Many insurance policies include a disability clause which provides for the cancellation of further premium payments if the insured is totally and permanently disabled so that he cannot carry on his life occupation.

Although life insurance is one of the safest means of providing family security, and in the endowment form one of the best methods of saving, it is not to be contracted for lightly with no regard to the policy or the reputation of the company, but personal circumstances should be talked over frankly with an honest agent of a well-established, conservative type of life insurance company. The contract needs clear interpretation since its legal terminology, usually unfamiliar to the layman, is easily misunderstood. Because so much depends upon the counsel of the agent, the man seeking insurance should first satisfy himself that he is dealing with a man of integrity who will sell him the kind of insurance best adapted to his needs.

Although insurance nearly always should have a part in the family expenditures, care must be exercised not to overload the family budget in the attempt to anticipate future security or endowment. It is surely not good policy to create a burden in the present under which the family will stagger in the effort to build up safety in a distant future. Judgment must be exercised as certainly in buying insurance as in buying food or clothing. Here as always the question is not what the family would prefer but what it can wisely assume, taking into account all economic circumstances.

**Credit and the buying on installments.** There are two questions that usually arise in financial discussions of the family. To what extent shall payments be made on a cash basis? When shall they be charged for future payment? The same sort of question appears also in a special form, as to whether there shall be purchases made on installments. Although it proves profitable to buy certain commodities for cash, there are many advantages that come from the family's establishing credit by carrying a charge account in department stores and similar retail organizations. To have good credit in a community permits the family to enjoy an economic standing that is available in an emergency as economic security. Since the business of many stores is built upon the basis of credit, there is no financial advantage in paying cash so far as the purchase price is concerned. The

credit account also provides an easy way for checking expenditures month by month.

The great danger is that credit be over used so that a burden of debt is created, and undoubtedly there are families that spend much more freely because they can charge than they would if everything they purchased were on a cash basis. But this, however, does not concern the family of good judgment which makes proper use of credit, except as the losses due to bad debts affect the prices of the commodities sold.

Installment buying, a distinctly American scheme, is buying on credit with payments extending over a considerable period of time. Necessarily commodities sold on such terms must cost more than when they are paid for in cash. On the other hand the purchaser, instead of putting aside stated sums of money over an extended period to buy the desired article, has it for immediate use and pays for it while enjoying its advantages. Installment buying is very common among young people just starting marriage as it permits them to have comforts from the beginning that otherwise they would be denied. The great temptation is to over-buy because each installment payment by itself seems small. If, however, there be many such monthly obligations the total sum cuts seriously into the budget and becomes a real burden.

It is generally true that legal title remains with the seller until full payment has been made, and if the family cannot meet any payment when due, the article is taken back by the seller and then the installments already paid by the family are a total loss. To prevent this, in a case of emergency it is well, if necessary, to borrow and pay the installment. But the family that has without caution become liable for many installment purchases may in an emergency of unemployment or sickness find it impossible to borrow sufficiently to make the necessary payments as they come due, resulting in a considerable loss of family income already paid out.

Installment buying increases the need of careful budgeting of income. The items mount up rapidly if desire is not restrained, and too little margin is left for ordinary living expenses. It is not safe to interpret installments as a form of saving, since they do not add to the family security.

**Home ownership.** Whether it is wise to build or purchase a house is a question that cannot be answered offhand by the newly married couple with no regard to their personal circumstances. Ameri-

can life is so mobile that it is frequently a decided handicap to have one's savings largely in a house, which if one moves away may not bring nearly so much as it cost because of fluctuation in the value of real estate, or which may tempt one to remain where he is when it is for his personal advantage to go elsewhere and accept a new business or professional opportunity. On the other hand, there are many young people who want a place of their own and who find much satisfaction in owning their own house. There are those who first learn to save by paying for the house that they have purchased or constructed.

From the social point of view it is highly desirable to have as many home owners in a community as possible, since it gives a stability and feeling of responsibility hard to achieve among those who are renters. The buying or building of a house ordinarily should be undertaken cautiously by the newly married and not until they have had some experience in housekeeping and have become familiar with the community in which they plan to reside.

Once the decision is made to build, there is special need of restraining the impulse to attempt to put up too expensive a house. It is also risky to regard the house as a form of family saving, since, especially if the house be already mortgaged, it may be extremely difficult to draw from the property in case of need of any economic assistance. Instead the house itself may be an added burden on the family budget if unemployment, a decrease in salary, or chronic illness brings about economic stress. One has to save money to accumulate funds for a house, and such property does not give the security of the savings bank deposit. A place therefore should be found in the budget for savings that provide security even when the family is paying for a house.

**Psychic aspects of economic adjustment.** It is a mistake to over-simplify the problem of financial adjustment in the family and to assume that it is merely a matter of experience and judgment. Here as in all other decisions that are made in life there often lie underneath the conscious motives subtle mental impulses that prevent sound decision.

#### *Case 28*

The husband and wife are not happy and are drifting farther apart. At the time of marriage the man was a cashier in a local bank and was prospering. Probably "pull" explains in part his appointment to this position, for he became increasingly inefficient and was finally obliged to resign.

His wife on the contrary is a very skillful housekeeper, attractive, social and popular. They have three children. The husband and wife still go out into society together, but they are not companionable and are rapidly drifting apart. Mrs. Z. without violating conventions has gradually substituted friendship with Mr. C. for the loss of comradeship she feels in her own husband. Mr. C. is frequently at the house and often plays bridge at the evening parties that gather there.

Mrs. Z. inherited a small property upon which the family has increasingly come to depend for support. Her husband has taken a small business which brings in little profit and without the wife's support the family would be unable to meet its obligations. The evidence that this situation is irksome to the husband and that he has developed inferiority feeling comes out so clearly in his conversation and attitudes that no one acquainted with the family has any doubt regarding his reaction.

**Planning.** The advantages of planning family expenditures are so easily tested that it seems strange that so many American families year after year continue financial struggle without ever attempting any definite budget. If the husband and wife would sit down together once a month, with paper and pencil, and work out an estimate of necessary expenditures, their wishes, and their income, most of them would emerge from their persistent controversy over money matters. They refuse to use foresight, and instead of thinking, worry and quarrel without making headway.

In planning family expenditures there is need of clearly thinking out the objectives of the family and the pressing necessities of each member. Even the child old enough to express his wants should be given a chance to state the things he would like to have his parents get. A quiet, coöperative, friendly discussion of desires and resources helps to unite the family, build up a sense of justice, and instruct the children in the meaning of money, while money disputes in families that persist in avoiding any plan of expenditures breed tension, jealousy, dissatisfaction and other expressions of domestic discord.

One advantage that comes from the family council over finances is that any especially heavy expenditure coming in a particular month, such as life insurance premiums, taxes, tuition, or dentistry, can be recognized by all the family and individual desires given up temporarily that there may be sufficient funds on hand.

**Budget making.** The modern way to deal with family finances is to establish a budget system, and in most cities the family can get



expert advice from bank officials in the making of an appropriate budget. The budget system is not only the most efficient way of handling household finances, but it can become a form of genuine education and a source of interest to each member of the family that enters into its making.

A proper budget is something more than merely a matter of making the family income equal expenditures month by month. This is an indispensable feature, but it is not the only object sought. Rather there is involved a thoroughgoing searching into the family situation, its future prospects, special requirements, the vocational status, age, needs, and expectations of each member of the family, and the economic status of relatives. It is also necessary to take into account business conditions, fluctuation of prices, advances in standards of living, possible contingencies such as unexpected illnesses, the coming of visitors without invitation, the upkeep and deterioration of the house and car, or possible increase in rent and transportation, and the obsolescence of equipment and furnishings.

There is involved also the knowledge of the economic situation of the family, including the advantages and disadvantages of installment buying and the proportion of the income that should go for savings.<sup>4</sup>

Every household budget must provide for the expenses of the home. These include food, shelter, clothing, utilities, insurance, savings, miscellaneous expenditures, and frequently debt. There cannot be a standard mathematical program of expenditures which can be made to fit every family. In each case the budget needs to be adapted not only to income but to the family conditions. Experience has shown that, varying with the amount of the income, a definite percentage tends to be spent for food, for clothing, for shelter and for savings. The adoption of some such ready-made budget is better than none at all, but it is not the kind of economic adjustment that the intelligent family will desire.

The following budgets are examples that may be made a basis for discussion. The first comes from a former student recently married and living in New York City on a relatively small income as he begins his vocational career. The young people have not yet completed their second year of marriage but have already surprised relatives and

<sup>4</sup> See H. F. Bigelow, "Toward a Theory of Family Finance," *Journal of Home Economics*, April, 1931, pp. 325-332.

friends who feared they might not safely marry on such a precarious income. Instead of waiting for greater economic security they married with the determination to achieve happiness and advance the career of the husband.

### *Case 29*

When we were married about two years ago we had a total capital of about \$250 plus wedding gifts in money amounting to \$200. In addition to this I was carrying insurance of \$1,000. On the honeymoon we spent \$200 (and do not regret it). We were fortunate in having as an additional wedding present the use of an apartment in New York for the first four months after we were married. During this time I was making \$31.50 a week and Mildred soon took an afternoon clinic job at about \$14 per week.

At the end of four months we leased a one-room-kitchenette-and-bath apartment on the fifth floor for \$50 a month. By designing, constructing and painting our own furniture, and making our draperies, pillows, etc., we not only kept the furnishing cost below \$100 but had the pleasure of an original and attractive home.

Three months after moving into this apartment our combined income was raised to about \$56 a week.

During the first year we had two major unforeseen expenses: Doctor's bills totaling \$112, and a robbery in which we lost money, clothing, etc., amounting to \$250. After this we managed to get the rent reduced to \$45.

Recently, after much consideration, we decided that I should take out \$10,000 in annuity insurance. At the end of some thirty years this insurance will begin to pay us a definite income, so we look at it as being an investment as well as a protection.

Neither of us has been to Europe, and it is our hope that before our permanent home is started it will be possible for us to make this trip. Accordingly we have saved systematically with this in mind, and now are well within reach of the goal.

On account of general cuts in salaries our combined income has been reduced to \$52.50 a week. Mildred is now working only three afternoons a week.

Our budget system consists of some 20 envelopes into which we divide the weekly income. The money in certain envelopes is used up each week, while in others it is allowed to accumulate. When the accumulation becomes sizable it is banked (to avoid robbery). Each envelope is called by either a proper name or a nickname and all have become very prominent in family affairs. The division of the budget and the names of the envelopes are as follows:

## 304 ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT IN MARRIAGE

Altruism (i.e., gifts, entertaining, etc.)	\$ .30
Accouterments (i.e., contraceptives)	.40
Allowance, Mildred (including lunches, subways, etc.)	2.50
Allowance, John " " " "	2.50
Benev. (i.e., benevolences)	4.00
Clothes, Mildred	1.50
Clothes, John	1.25
Drug Account (soap to tooth brushes)	.25
Europe	9.55
Food (including week-end expenses)	9.85
Laundry, Cleaning and Pressing	3.00
Lights and Gas	1.10
Milk	.45
Recreation	1.00
Rent	10.50
Stamps	.05
Savings and Insurance	3.30
Telephone	1.00
	<hr/>
	\$52.50

All our recently married friends are using this envelope system of budgeting and they, as we, find it indispensable as a money stretcher.

You will notice that in the budget we are saving \$9.55 a week for Europe; this means that something of the same type of budget could be used if the income were even less than \$45.00 a month.

The following two budgets are taken from a study made by Mrs. Chase Going Woodhouse.

### THE BLACKS LIVED ON \$2,413.01 <sup>5</sup>

Food purchased	\$659.22
Meals out	9.30
School milk	7.56

Total Food	\$676.08	28.0 per cent of total expenditures
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Clothing	
General	\$ 1.33
Husband	81.35

<sup>5</sup> C. G. Woodhouse, "How the Joneses Do It," *Graphic Survey*, November 1, 1928, pp. 148-50.

Wife .....	\$ 33.49
Daughter 8 .....	53.11

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Total Clothing .....	\$169.28
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7.0 per cent of total ex-  
penditures

#### Operating

Fuel .....	\$106.14
Light .....	31.63
Water .....	6.36
Telephone .....	34.55
Ice .....	16.80
Supplies .....	12.84
Laundry sent out .....	.25
Service, child care .....	4.81
Stationery, stamps, etc. ....	1.00
Carfare .....	13.08

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Total Operating .....	\$227.46
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9.4 per cent of total ex-  
penditures

#### Housing

Repairs .....	\$289.57
Taxes .....	66.03
Interest on mortgage .....	210.00

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Total Housing .....	\$565.60
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Plus 6 per cent on equity  
in house 23.3 per cent  
of total expenditures

#### Health

General .....	\$ .10
Husband .....	13.00
Wife .....	2.00
Daughter .....	None

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Total Health .....	\$ 15.10
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.6 per cent of total ex-  
penditures

#### Development

Reading .....	\$ 15.86
Church .....	32.25
Charity .....	9.50
Taxes other than house .....	1.88
Gifts outside family .....	41.19
Recreation .....	12.95
Recreational equipment .....	9.99



## 306 ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT IN MARRIAGE

Children's equipment .....	\$ .60	
Associations .....	21.35	
Formal education .....	51.80	
<hr/>		
Total Development .....	\$197.37	8.2 per cent of total ex- penditures
Furniture and Equipment .....	\$ 49.49	2.1 per cent of total ex- penditures
Automobile .....	\$111.43	4.6 per cent of total ex- penditures
Personal		
General .....	\$ 7.16	
Husband .....	7.82	
Wife .....	1.79	
Daughter .....	2.05	
<hr/>		
Total Personal .....	\$ 18.82	.8 per cent of total ex- penditures
Savings		
Life insurance .....	\$128.78	
Payments on house .....	210.00	
Other .....	30.00	
<hr/>		
Total Savings .....	\$368.78	15.2 per cent of total ex- penditures
Chickens .....	\$ 15.88	7 per cent of total ex- penditures

### TWO BOYS IN COLLEGE AND \$5,349.53

Food purchased .....	\$ 908.75	
Meals out .....	21.50	
Husband's lunches .....	6.00	
School milk .....	15.70	
<hr/>		
Total Food .....	\$ 951.95	17.8 per cent of total ex- penditures
Clothing		
General .....	\$ 2.50	
Husband .....	37.20	
Wife .....	40.41	
Son 18 .....	131.86	

Son 17 .....	\$ 139.42	
Son 14 .....	31.58	
<hr/>		
Total Clothing .....	\$ 382.97	7.6 per cent of total expenditures
Operating		
Fuel .....	\$ 109.42	
Light .....	41.38	
Telephone .....	32.55	
Ice .....	12.05	
Supplies .....	11.43	
Laundry .....	37.30	
Service .....	1.45	
Safe deposit .....	3.00	
Insurance on furniture .....	4.05	
Stationery, stamps, etc. ....	24.69	
Carfare .....	33.60	
<hr/>		
Total Operating .....	\$ 310.92	5.8 per cent of total expenditures
Housing		
Rent .....	\$ 520.00	9.7 per cent of total expenditures
Health		
General .....	\$ 9.40	
Wife .....	2.00	
Son 18 .....	11.50	
Son 17 .....	17.00	
Son 14 .....	44.30	
<hr/>		
Total Health .....	\$ 84.20	1.6 per cent of total expenditures
Development		
Reading .....	\$ 48.24	
Charity .....	9.50	
Gifts outside family .....	25.40	
Recreation .....	147.65	
Recreational equipment .....	21.90	
Child's equipment .....	2.85	
Entertaining .....	.60	
Vacation .....	92.15	
Vocation .....	9.25	

## 308 ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT IN MARRIAGE

Associations .....	\$ 50.60	
Formal education .....	1,138.48	
<hr/>		
Total Development .....	\$1,546.62	28.9 per cent of total expenditures
Furniture and Equipment .....	\$ 85.65	1.6 per cent of total expenditures
Automobile .....	\$1,043.57	19.5 per cent of total expenditures
Personal		
General .....	\$ 13.35	
Husband .....	115.53	
Wife .....	11.07	
Son 18 .....	103.30	
Son 17 .....	107.48	
Son 14 .....	29.12	
<hr/>		
Total Personal .....	\$ 379.85	7.1 per cent of total expenditures
Savings		
Life insurance .....	\$ 13.45	.3 per cent
Interest on note .....	\$ 30.35	.6 per cent

The following is interesting because it gives us the situation of rural families and shows the fluctuating proportion of expenditures for various items in relation to change in income.

### PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF LIVING EXPENDITURES ACCORDING TO CASH RECEIPTS <sup>6</sup>

<i>Cash Receipts</i>			<i>House-</i>		<i>Advance-</i>	
<i>Groups</i>	<i>Food</i>	<i>Clothing</i>	<i>hold</i>	<i>Health</i>	<i>ment</i>	<i>Personal</i>
\$ 500 or less ....	36.7	19.3	32.4	3.1	4.7	3.8
501-\$1,000 ....	40.1	22.5	14.8	9.8	6.8	6.0
1,001- 1,500 ....	36.7	21.5	16.5	9.7	9.3	6.3
1,501- 2,000 ....	36.6	25.0	16.6	6.6	8.5	6.7
2,001- 2,500 ....	32.1	23.2	19.3	9.3	10.0	6.1
2,501- 3,000 ....	31.9	22.9	20.1	6.9	12.0	6.2

<sup>6</sup> C. C. Zimmerman and John D. Black, "Factors Affecting Expenditures of Farm Family Incomes in Minnesota" (University of Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin 246, Table 27, p. 22).

<i>Cash Receipts</i>			<i>House-</i>		<i>Advance-</i>	
<i>Groups</i>	<i>Food</i>	<i>Clothing</i>	<i>hold</i>	<i>Health</i>	<i>ment</i>	<i>Personal</i>
\$3,001-\$3,500 . . . .	28.8	22.3	18.6	8.8	14.4	7.1
3,501- 4,000 . . . .	28.9	22.3	17.8	11.9	12.8	6.3
4,001- 4,500 . . . .	31.9	26.8	17.3	10.0	8.7	5.3
4,501- 5,000 . . . .	28.5	23.0	21.6	6.7	14.2	6.0
5,001- 5,500 . . . .	28.4	25.3	18.4	14.9	7.7	5.3
5,501- 6,000 . . . .	28.7	21.3	27.5	2.5	14.6	5.4
6,001- 6,500 . . . .	28.8	18.1	22.5	5.8	11.5	13.3
6,501- or more . .	26.8	20.6	27.8	8.8	10.0	6.0
<b>Total . . . . .</b>	<b>32.2</b>	<b>22.8</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>6.2</b>

**Handling the funds.** The budget provides a financial strategy for family adjustment. Its success depends largely upon the judgment of those spending the family income. There must be both skill in making purchases and accuracy in keeping accounts. Most families find that to accomplish the first, buying has to be gradually delegated to one member of the family, and ordinarily this is the wife. Confusion is likely to result if various members of the family purchase supplies, and there is not the opportunity to profit from experience that comes when the buying is nearly always done by the same person.

The interested, conscientious housewife will become fascinated with the problems of getting the best value for money spent. She will largely ignore suggestive advertising and develop discrimination regarding the quality of various articles. An organization like the Consumers' Research helps the family buyer. Women also find helpful suggestions in household magazines, if they keep in mind the fact that these periodicals get most of their economic support from advertising. They never tolerate any known fraudulent advertisement, but they do, when they legitimately can, favor advertised articles over competitive articles not advertised. Home economics departments of state colleges also give helpful suggestions by lectures and by printed literature which assists the inexperienced housewife in discriminating between various claims put forward by those competing for a part of the money she spends. Many women enjoy keeping a record and comparing the results from year to year, and the information they gather often proves extremely helpful as from time to time they reconstruct their budget.



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## CHAPTER XXI

### WOMAN'S AMBITIONS AND MARRIAGE ADJUSTMENT

Ambition not a sex trait. Women are also human. They are not because of their feminine inheritance lacking in ambition. It is true that they have in times past been interpreted as lacking the desire for rivalry, distinction, and achievement, the idea being that these characteristics are normally masculine. It is futile to turn back for any clew to the understanding of woman's nature. The *mores* of the past have been so distinctly masculine, at least during the historic period, that too much pressure has been put upon women to conform to traditional standards for past ideas of woman's character to have any value. It is human to be ambitious and there is no evidence that permits us to classify human nature, from the point of view of eagerness for competition and a career, as masculine or feminine. It is an individual difference rather than a sex distinction. This fact has the utmost importance in understanding present problems of domestic adjustment.

There is another aspect of domestic adjustment that must not be overlooked. It is not always true that women who work seek professional success because they are motivated by the desire for rivalry or distinction. There are economic reasons that explain why a multitude of women work outside the home. Woman's employment cannot be thought of as something of importance only in dealing with the family that is on the lower economic scale. There are many women who work not because they prefer leaving the family for outside employment but because to them it seems that they must do this to maintain economic security, and it is not only women in families close to the breadline that have this feeling.

To the onlooker there may seem to be a great difference between the necessity of the wage-earning woman's leaving her family for outside activity and the need of the business or professional woman's going out to earn a salary. From the woman's point of view the feeling of compulsion may be the same, for in each case it may be that the standards to which the woman is accustomed can only be main-

tained by her adding her part to the family income. The woman's reaction is relative and subjective, and the observer who forgets this distorts the facts when he assumes that the wife of any man who earns a fair income seeks employment merely because of her desire for a career or her aversion for housekeeping. In the middle class group the woman in the out-of-the-home vocation may be motivated by either economic pressure or personal preference, or by both.

There is nothing handed over by inheritance to the woman that equips her to enter upon housekeeping or to enjoy it or that turns her away from the industrial, professional, and business activities that attract men. The influences that result from the traditional division of labor between men and women account for the greater readiness of most women to accept the responsibilities of homemaking. There is likewise in neither man nor woman any inheritance that necessarily antagonizes the carrying on of household vocations. The ease with which men become accomplished cooks demonstrates the social origin of the usual difference between men and women in their attitude toward and their skill in housekeeping activities.

Modern life has brought to women a new freedom from social coercion which gives many of them the choice of committing themselves to housekeeping or to a career similar to that of their husbands, or accepting a compromise between the two. Just as soon as social change presented this opportunity of choice it became clear that many women preferred a career and if marriage brought them the necessity of giving it up marriage meant for them a sacrifice.

The social situation of the past will not return. Woman will not be willing to go back to the lesser freedom of her former situation. Indeed, we are apt to forget that even in Colonial America a few remarkable women maintained from the start a surprising freedom and carried on vocational activities at that time commonly delegated only to men. They were exceptions, and through force of character or because of remarkable circumstances their unusual behavior was tolerated if not widely approved.

Once the girl received equal educational opportunity with the boy, it followed inevitably that she would respond as did the boy to social stimulation in our non-stratified society, and in proportion to her individual opportunity would desire competition, distinction, and achievement. Of course the new order of things complicates domestic adjustment, adding difficulties which former generations escaped. In



not a few cases the fundamental problem of domestic adjustment centers about the question whether the wife shall continue after marriage to work outside the family, and if she does what sort of home life husband and wife will attempt to carry on.

Even in the wealthiest classes where there is no economic motive for out-of-the-home activities, the same question in some specific form frequently arises. Then the issue is whether the woman shall attempt to enter politics, business, a profession, or even social ambition in a way that limits her family interests and requires some sort of compromise of the husband-wife relationship.

The problem is not an American one but a modern one, for as present-day civilization spreads itself, this same question of woman's employment and woman's ambition in out-of-the-family activities arises in greater or less degree in the Orient, the Near East, and in Europe just as it does in the United States. In our country we find some differences between sections, particularly between the cities and the rural districts, but it is very easy to over-state this since it is rather often a difference in opportunity to work outside the family that determines the policy of the woman rather than social pressure. The most remote rural sections of the United States are becoming familiar with the professional woman worker, especially in teaching and in the extension services of our colleges and universities. In isolated communities there may be some feeling and more gossip when the natives discover that the woman worker is married. This is seldom carried so far as to ostracize her. Usually the rural woman, whatever her ambition, must find satisfaction in out-of-the-family activities that do not seriously conflict with conventional home life.

**The woman's dilemma.** If woman's new vocational freedom brings perplexing questions to the woman as she contemplates or enters marriage, and as she considers motherhood or becomes a mother, it also brings similar problems to the man as the woman he loves meets these various stages of choice. On the woman, however, falls more heavily the burden of her dilemma. According to the strength of her ambition, the opportunities in her vocation, she reacts more strongly to the decisions that are forced upon her.

Shall she marry or continue in the freedom of her independence? If she marries shall she accept housekeeping and give up or modify her out-of-the-home activities? Under such circumstances what does she owe her husband? What does he expect? With what will he be

permanently satisfied? How far should she surrender her ambition to further his? If housekeeping cannot be contemplated, to what extent will the domestic relationship itself rival her career and check her vocational freedom? Shall she be a mother? and if she accepts parenthood, to what extent should the coming of the child change if it does not put an end to her out-of-the-home vocation? What shall she do in case she becomes convinced that she has greater talent or more opportunity or a larger earning capacity than her husband but sees that if she pursues the opportunity given her, it will alienate her husband or at least lessen their domestic happiness? What does she owe society as contrasted to her obligations to the family? What is just to herself and her talent or skill as compared with her family obligations? These are representative questions that sooner or later force themselves upon the consciousness of the modern woman, even when she enters matrimony thoughtlessly with no realization of the possible complications that marriage may bring.

Her decisions necessarily concern her husband and, if she is a mother, her child. And most of all they concern her, for she cannot safely delegate to husband, parent, friend, or even social traditions the authority to determine her career for her. Her dilemma comes to her because living in the modern world has put upon her the prerogative of self-decision. What she determines proves supremely important, when she marries, for domestic adjustment. Even sex relationship cannot be detached from her fundamental choice of domestic policy. If her decision antagonizes her husband and leads to inferiority feeling on his part, makes him feel pushed aside, or convinces him that she is lacking in wife-like loyalty, one of the first evidences of his emotional protest will be in his changed attitude toward sex. In a similar fashion, if she accepts a decision which seems to her forced upon her rather than freely made, or which as time goes on becomes irksome and disappointing because of emotional conflict, she in turn cannot prevent her reaction from detrimentally influencing her sex adjustment.

It is not surprising under such circumstances that this problem of careers for women looms so large in current literature, for it brings to a focus the various influences that are producing the new woman. To regard contemporary discussion as an exaggeration of feminist propaganda is to misinterpret the situation of the modern woman. She has discovered herself and has come to realize that the traits once thought of as man's are actually human and mean as much for her

and for her happiness as for any other individual, whether male or female. To attempt to goad her into sacrifice by re-creating social pressure merely adds to the burden of her problem. Any insistence that she cannot have marriage unless she is willing to put aside her recently acquired attitudes and conform to former standards, with the argument that only so can she obtain a social license to realize her sex needs, encourages her to repudiate the matrimonial code and attempt to find in unorthodox sex relationship a substitute for that which she has been led to believe is the motive of marriage and which only social convention attempts to deny her.

Former mechanisms of control can no more be made to operate than former domestic ideals can be dragged back from the past. The woman's choice is hard at best, if she has responded in any degree to the social stimulations that create in the United States the desire for gregarious rivalry and personal distinction. Sacrifice may be demanded and justified but it cannot be forced upon her by the threat that as a last resort the *mores* that once effectively held in check woman's ambition will be resurrected.<sup>1</sup>

**Motives of women who work.** It is not to be expected that women enter employment out of the family always with a single conscious motive. Their decision is made, like most of those in life, as a result of complex desires. Even on the lower economic level where it is clear that the family needs the wage of the wife, her occupation may bring her more satisfactions than if she were able to devote herself entirely to the home. Among women more fortunately situated we find that they themselves frequently find it difficult to analyze their motives and even when they insist that they are thinking only of adding to the family income we at times discover that they are rationalizing. They still have a feeling that the burden of proof is put upon them and that they must defend their course, especially in instances in which they realize that the husband reacts unfavorably to their working or believes that his associates criticize what the wife is doing.

Some find no satisfying outlet within the home for impulses that require satisfaction. This in a man would be taken as a matter of course; in a woman it is often considered peculiar. We still think of women as domesticated by their sex equipment, less responsive to the stimuli that acting upon the male make him competitive and ambi-

<sup>1</sup> Groves and Ogburn, *American Marriage and Family Relationships*, Chap. 5, "Psychology of the Woman Who Works."

tious. Collier, in her study, found that the most persistent answer to the question, Why are you seeking a career? was, It is a congenial occupation that adds to my happiness and thereby to that of the family.<sup>2</sup> Less than one-tenth of the women she studied claimed to be motivated by financial necessity while nearly one-half affirmed that their one purpose was to find an outlet for energy and desire that the family enterprise could not satisfy. As was to be expected, although contrary to common opinion, there was nothing strange or unnatural in the attitudes of these women who were carrying on careers. They prove themselves as domestic as women commonly are by undertaking, in some cases, the double task of maintaining the management of a family while carrying on a professional career.

**Classification of motives.** A great many married women are untroubled by the necessity of choice since their economic situation decrees that they must work. Their employment need not mean that they prefer to be away from the family or that they find as much contentment in working out of the home as when they are privileged to care for their husband and children. Their purpose is to help support the family, and they are expressing loyalty to husband and children rather than indifference to their home. Possibly the husband is ill or there is a sick child who requires an expense that the husband's wages by themselves cannot meet. It may merely be that the husband's occupation does not permit him to support the family, particularly if it is a large one. Women who fall in this class of those who must work for the welfare of the family are victims of economic necessity, though they may also enjoy and profit from their work as much as if it were a matter of choice.

Then there is the middle class group that through training has developed talent or ambition for which the family provides no place but which must have outlet if there is to be the sense of living a worth-while life. These women can be classified as ambitious, and with them must be placed a considerable number of the wealthy women who assume political or social leadership. Another grouping is made up of young women who think of the vocations to which they go as temporary stop-gaps, which they can make profitable and pleasant during the time that they are attempting to find their mate. They may be influenced in the choice of what they do by the apparent opportunity

<sup>2</sup> V. M. Collier, *Marriage and Careers*, p. 25.



it offers for coming in contact with marriageable young men. There is also the incentive that comes from obtaining spending money over which the parents can have no control, permitting the having of clothes and recreation that enhances the chances of finding a life mate. Frequently this type of woman drifts into some line of work which develops into a permanent occupation because nothing else offers itself and it proves a bore to have nothing to do.

A fourth group of women desire to have a means of support if it should happen that eventually they should fail to marry, or if their marriage should go on the rocks. Sometimes there has been a change in motive and the young woman who entered her vocation seeking comradeship with the possibility of marriage, as she grows older feels that she has a slim chance of finding a love mate and begins to think of the work she does as an economic security and perhaps compensation for the matrimony that now seems far away and most uncertain.

A fifth group of women are at work not so much because of their attitude toward it as because of the dislike they have for housekeeping or household management. They may be domestic in a limited sense and willing to adjust themselves part of the time to the status of marriage, but they are unwilling to have the family dominate their life. They find almost any feasible out-of-the-home occupation a relief from the irksome tasks of the home, which grow more disagreeable the longer they continue them.

Another group find relief in work out of the family not because they dislike home-keeping but because their small house or their living with parents or an income that permits them to delegate their responsibility to a housekeeper leaves them with so little to do that they can only avoid being a parasite by finding something additional to take their time. Unwilling to fritter it away in trivial recreation after the manner of many of their acquaintances, they seek an occupation that carries with it enough responsibility to make them consider it seriously. Sometimes these women, no longer young, sensibly face the fact that they have lost much of their home responsibility because their children have grown up and gone elsewhere. Instead of reacting emotionally to their changed circumstances, as do many who find themselves thus stranded, these women seek to find new responsibility and in cases not a few discover in themselves unexpected resources and unrecognized ambitions. Some find part time work, some resign their family responsibilities to paid servants, and others instead of

entering employment take up various forms of community work or social service. The indictment of the American woman of leisure as a mere parasite is distinctly unjust to the majority of married women whose activities take every conceivable form and whose contributions to community, state, and nation certainly do not in value fall below those of men.

**Compensatory work.** Any one familiar with the problem of women in our cities in occupations such as stenography and nursing, who are moving toward a permanent spinsterhood, knows how often such women find in their work compensation for defeated love. It is not merely that they find something to do which gives them zest and takes away constant thought of what they most want, but rather that they find opportunity in their vocation to build up a personal attachment which itself partially fills the void that otherwise would make their destiny unendurable.

The following incident is characteristic enough to be thought of as an example of this compensation.

#### *Case 30*

A high executive in a business organization sought counsel because a member of his staff, notoriously unhappy in his family life, was so intimate with and dependent upon his stenographer. There was not the slightest suggestion of any unconventional conduct, but when the subordinate was asked to move from the headquarters of the organization to a distant city he consented on condition that his secretary go with him. His chief was in doubt whether to permit this or to insist upon a break in an attachment that was already attracting attention. The latter in his conversation admitted that this same kind of attachment was apparent between many of his staff and their secretaries and had gone on year after year. Without question many of these men were more confidential with their women assistants than with their own wives and had a greater respect for the competency of the former than of the latter. It happens that this chief executive had recently lost his own secretary, who had resigned after having served him for twelve years. A year or two later he came for consultation concerning the wisdom of a second marriage after the death of his wife. Driven by various circumstances to realize, even from the point of view of duty to his children, that it was necessary for him to attempt to rehabilitate his family life and to marry, he had turned toward his former secretary and had found her responsive. To his great surprise she finally admitted that it was because of her intense feeling for him that she had found it impossible to stay in his employ.

The case was interesting in showing how unconsciously, at least so far as the man is concerned, this compensative relationship may be built up which opens to the woman worker expression for emotions that would normally appear in the marriage relationship. Occasionally, but rarely in proportion to the number of instances, the end of such an attachment is a triangular or sex scandal. The more common misfortune is for the woman to be exploited in her readiness to accept responsibility by her employer who may realize or be unconscious of the special meaning he has come to have for the woman who serves him. Her thought, her ambition, her pride is in the success of the enterprise which he directs, and to further his interests she hesitates at no sacrifice, often working overtime and remaining in his employ against her own clear interest.

**The double burden of the woman in domestic adjustment.** When the woman who marries goes on with her career or her out-of-the-family occupation she commonly accepts a double burden, attempting to establish and maintain a family life while at the same time carrying on her vocation. The situation needs only to be stated to bring out its dangers in domestic maladjustment. The conditions that result from the wife's attempt to compromise two different and possibly antagonizing undertakings may be reflected in the growing dissatisfaction of the husband. He may come to feel that he has no genuine home and may drift into forms of recreation or associations that further isolate him from his wife.

If a child is involved, he may react strongly against his mother's working outside the family or because of her absence may start habits or form social acquaintances that may endanger his character. On the other hand, the woman's conscientious effort to meet successfully her ordeal may result in nervousness, inability to sleep, loss of appetite, nervous breakdown, irritability, or the mere lack of time for domestic fellowship. She may awaken to the bitter thought that what she is doing for the family along material lines is at the same time crushing out domestic fellowship and creating strain between herself and her husband.

Even her sex life may react unfavorably to the spending of her energy in her out-of-the-family occupation, or her concentration upon her ambitions may so rival sex attraction as to seem to her husband a direct attack upon their physical adjustment. It cannot be made a matter of rule, for both men and women react to intense mental effort,

so far as sex is concerned, in two opposite directions. With some it seems to stimulate sex and necessitate more outlet than if there were not such nervous expenditure in work. Napoleon Bonaparte seems to have been a man of this type. On the other hand, there are those who appear to have a limited capital of nervous energy so that if it is put to use in business, in art or in social activities, there is just that much less for sexual expression. Although all individuals vary in sex energy from time to time, these persons especially are liable to become too tired after the day's occupation to respond to love-making. When the ambitious woman reacts in this manner, it is not strange that the husband comes to feel that her outside activities are attacking domestic adjustment and robbing the marriage of its one-time promise.

It must be remembered that the test of the wife's program when she enters employment out of the home is not successfully met in the early months of her double task. It is only when time has gone on long enough to show the wear and tear of her effort to maintain a home while at the same time carrying on a career that we can see what the consequences are likely to be. The results do not always disclose a menace to domestic adjustment.

The situation may develop in the opposite direction, since the wife who has been discontented, lacking in enterprise, without much zest, may awaken and be happier, healthier and stronger, once she finds something in addition to the family to take her attention and give her abilities an outlet. What will solve a family problem in one case may create one in another. The only thing certain is that the woman of ambition must herself recognize her special problem of adjustment when she marries, and her husband must likewise realize that whatever her decision, whether to continue the work pursued before marriage or to give it up, there is for both of them a necessary adjustment which is more complicated than when there is no disposition on her part to undertake more than the management of the family.

**The child and domestic adjustment.** The child, potential or actual, becomes a factor in the domestic adjustment of the family when the woman works outside the home. Every conceivable form of problem appears. No children may be born, because at the beginning husband and wife agreed to this policy so that the wife might continue her career or vocation. As the years pass the husband may stay with his agreement or emotionally protest against it. The child may come, against the wish of both parents, and as a consequence the



wife may have to give up her career. She may do this willingly or as the result of circumstances over which she has no control. She may go back to work and turn her child over to some one else, and this policy may be acceptable to her and her husband or may be violently opposed by either.

The child, when he becomes old enough to react to her working outside the family, may be proud of what his mother does or may resent it, or he may be ashamed that she appears to need to be employed. Her working may deny him any real contact with a mother, or, on the other hand, she may so regulate her time at home that he may actually benefit from a fellowship highly constructive in quality even when limited in amount. Through fatigue she may be so nervous or emotionally unstable as to hurt the child's growing personality in childhood, or through her absence he may be in association with an adult more stable than herself and better able to influence him in his habit-forming period. The expense of the child may force the mother to continue her occupation after the time when she had determined to give it up. On the other hand, his coming may bring her an incentive, a new attack upon life which will measurably increase her usefulness or her reputation. The question of how children enter into this problem of women working outside the home is always concrete and unique so far as any definite family is concerned.

**Housekeeping as a career.** The question naturally arises, Why is not the ambitious woman who marries content to make of her housekeeping a career? This probably happens in many marriages. In such cases the woman may not speak of her occupation as does the business or professional woman of her career, but it is evident when one observes her reaction that her household activities bring her genuine satisfaction and make of her a demand for skill to which she responds and which leaves her with the conviction that she is engaged in a worth-while enterprise. On the other hand, a large proportion of housewives who feel no temptation to go outside the family to pursue a different vocation accept their family responsibilities as a task and in no sense come to have the attitude characteristic of those who are following a career.

There is another large group of women, which appears to be constantly increasing, who do not readily find in housekeeping opportunity for carrying on a career. These women are too ambitious to be satisfied merely in doing a task brought them by marriage, but try as

they may they cannot convince themselves that housekeeping is either a business or a profession. This does not mean that they question the value of household occupations nor that they deny that skill and judgment are required in good management, particularly if the care of children is included.

It is important to notice the difficulties these women find when they attempt to develop the household service into a profession or a career. Their statements when sifted logically bring out inherent obstacles in the way of making housekeeping a profession. Taking care of the house lacks social prestige, denying even to the successful any sense of public recognition. Housekeeping has no generally accepted standard which permits comparison so as to give the zest of rivalry. Because of this household work is largely non-competitive, furnishing no chance for one housekeeper to contest in skill or output with another. Housekeeping is strikingly a routine occupation. A great part of its activity, once mastered, is repeated over and over again, losing its interest and becoming toil. Mechanical and electrical appliances prove an advantage but because of the smallness of the household unit they are relatively expensive and far less time-saving than may be expected, particularly when they tempt the wife to keep within the house work that could economically be sent outside, such as laundry. The work of the household is non-gregarious, making it necessary for the woman to spend a great part of her life out of the world of social contact.

Finally, the results of household management are negative rather than positive in the impressions they give. Failure as revealed by over-running the budget and incurring bills that cannot be met when the first of the month arrives, or the badly cooked dinner, the cluttered room, the troublesome child, attracts the attention of the husband and family members, while success is taken for granted and passes unnoticed. In contrast with housekeeping, business and professional activities ordinarily do have some degree of prestige, a sense of standard which provides competition, and are not so much a routine, calling constantly for new adaptation to changing circumstances. They permit, far more than does housekeeping, contact with fellow workers, and attract attention to success oftener than to failure.

The idea of a career in this connection must be taken broadly so as to include occupations out of the home that bring even to the skilled worker a sense of achievement. For example, an experienced

social worker in one of the largest of the American department stores says that she has come to expect the return to the store of a large number of saleswomen, especially the more successful ones, who when they marry give up working. Generally within a year from the time when they withdrew from the store they come back asking for their old job. This is so common that an effort is made to keep the job open for the more efficient women until enough time has elapsed to render their return improbable. These women have much the same story to tell. They are not sorry they married, but they "just can't be happy, housekeeping." At first they were enthusiastic and had plenty to do in learning their new occupation. They soon found themselves with time on their hands and yet not free to leave the house. They began to grow weary in doing the same thing over and over again. They discovered that much of what they did, particularly in the way of cooking, could be better done commercially outside the home, and especially they began to feel lonesome as they carried on their household occupation. One of them summarized the situation as follows:

I dusted and dusted and arranged furniture again and again trying to keep busy, but I just couldn't help feeling lonesome until it got on my nerves. I was crazy to get back to the store. We have taken a smaller apartment and will eat out. May I have my old job?

**Motherhood as a career.** The care of children offers more opportunity for the sense of a career than does housekeeping. Nurses, teachers, social workers, orphanage managers, child clinic specialists, and others whose business has to do with children do have in their occupation the possibility of a career. Why then should not mothers find in their child care a sufficient career? One is obliged to answer, "Indeed, why not?" Being the mother of a child ought not to take away the sense of career that the nurse may have to whom the same child may be given. The fact is, however, that for the most part women do not yet find in motherhood the reactions that come in following a profession or a career. No one would argue that this is because child training is lacking in significant demand for skill and insight or because it represents a routine.

It would be hardly fair to insist that the art of motherhood is socially unappreciated. It may be taken as a matter of course, but no one in his senses would question its value to society. Apparently a part of the difficulty at present is the general failure to realize the need of

training on the part of the mother who attempts to meet her responsibilities and the rather common notion that her work is primarily sacrifice and unselfishness rather than skill. There are women who withstand the traditional attitude toward the art of motherhood and find in the care of their children a completely satisfying career. Some of these have surrendered business and professional opportunity and have a basis for comparison. They insist that child training in the home offers a satisfying outlet for the ambitious woman. There are, however, some handicaps in the way of making child care in the home a genuine profession. For one thing the relationship is personal. This would make many mothers feel that what they did for the child could not be classified as a professional activity. But we have already noticed that this personal note of relationship may exist between the business man and his secretary or stenographer without the latter feeling that the professional meaning of her occupation is destroyed.

Another difficulty in the way of the profession of motherhood is lack of standards. The intelligent mother acquainted with the science of child life, because of her superior equipment, may train children who seem to the casual observer failures on account of their unconventional character rather than successes. In physical child care we are closer to standards, but even here there has to be recognition of great differences between children on account of inheritance, childhood illnesses, and other influences. A very healthy child may be the product of exceptionally good fortune rather than of maternal skill. When we come to the more complex and subtle emotional and social traits of children, we are farther away from standards that permit comparison between mothers.

Child care also is lacking in the kind of gregarious experience that often explains the satisfaction the woman who works outside the family takes in her occupation. There is, of course, the association of the mother and the child, but this is nothing like even that which comes to the teacher who has many children, and the mother testifies often that she finds elements of dissatisfaction and a social hazard in being so much with personalities younger than herself. Her gregarious needs demand frequent adult contact.

There is some evidence that we are moving toward recognizing the profession of motherhood, but this trend, if it exists, is proceeding very slowly. If society should ever take the matter as seriously as it



now regards other forms of education, and should insist upon the mother's being trained, licensed to practice, supervised and inspected, as has become our social policy regarding the public school teacher, then motherhood might become for many women a genuine profession. Such a change of public attitude is at least far off.

**When children leave.** Even though child training seldom approaches professional occupations outside the home, it is true that many a mother finds herself stranded when her children grow up and permanently leave the family. Whether or not she has met her responsibilities in the spirit of the professional worker, she has concentrated her attention on her children and has made them the center of her activities. Sometimes she has gone farther than this and found in caring for them compensation for losses she has felt in the wife-husband relationship or in some other aspect of her life. Theoretically she has realized that the time would come when her children would grow up and leave her, but in practice this has always been pushed so far in the future that the event when it comes surprises and even bewilders her. Possibly she does not fully realize how she has entwined herself about the lives of her children until the ties have been severed. This situation is paralleled by that of the business man who is forced to retire because of his advanced age and who finds himself utterly at a loss to use the leisure that has come to him and which perhaps he has looked forward to longingly for years.

It is evident that the mother who refuses to continue interests outside her family and who allows the needs of her children to monopolize her attention is unjust to herself, unfair to her children, and almost certain to make the latter years of her life bitterly disappointing. Her program cheats the children, often retarding their development, and always bringing to them a narrower personality than would have been true had she widened her interests and maintained more contacts with out-of-the-family experiences.

**Domestic security.** In the working out of domestic adjustment it is dangerous to neglect consideration of the wife's ambition. Her policy should not be decided on the basis of her loyalty to her husband but from the higher level of domestic security in which her desires as well as the husband's should have just consideration. If the program adopted means that she is to carry on out-of-the-family business or professional activities, her husband owes to her all the coöperation within his power. This is imperative if she attempts to maintain

family life and at the same time carry on a business or a profession. It is the almost universal admission of women who successfully carry this double burden that their success has been made possible only through the assistance and sympathy given them by their husbands.

If the opposite decision is made and the woman drops her professional or business interests, both husband and wife should objectively consider what this means to her and attempt to work out a family program that will not make her feel that marriage has forced upon her sacrifices by taking her away from the work that she most wishes to do. The husband who takes it for granted that his wife will concentrate upon the home and surrender her career once she marries has little inkling of the meaning of domestic adjustment and by his lack of penetration endangers the security of the husband-wife relationship. The dilemma in which the ambitious woman finds herself when marriage antagonizes or prevents her career is, in the group of college graduates, often the major problem of domestic adjustment and sometimes the supreme problem. Of this both the wife and the husband need to be conscious, that any decision made may be intelligent rather than emotional.

In the enthusiasm of courtship the woman may discount the appeal that her vocation makes and may be led to promise to give up working, but to hold her to this decision after marriage, when it clearly appears that she did not fully realize how great a sacrifice she was making, is dangerous in the extreme. In the working out of a satisfactory domestic adjustment it is far better to reopen the issue and leave her free to test again her inclinations. She may again decide to surrender out-of-the-family activities, but if she has been given an honest chance to follow her own desire she will not be left with inner protest or any jealousy of her husband's vocational freedom, attitudes sure to disturb the domestic adjustment. The average man at present is too likely to minimize the desires of his wife who may be as ambitious as himself and as unable to find satisfaction in house-keeping.

The program of the wife should not be determined by what the husband regards as conventional, nor should he feel that any desire of hers for a career is disloyalty to love or a denial of his prerogatives. The ambitious, educated woman who marries may feel that it is necessary for her to sacrifice her impulses for a career while her husband remains free to follow his, but she has the right to make the

decision herself and not to feel that it is a matrimonial penalty forced upon her.

**The vocational influence of woman's dilemma.** In so far as the thought of possible marriage makes the unmarried woman worker feel that her pursuit of a profession or a career may have to come to a sudden break upon her entrance into matrimony, she is hampered in the use of her talent and unprepared to compete equally with men. Even when there is no deliberate facing of the possibility of marriage there is apt to be a lack of seriousness in preparing for any definite occupation, which reflects the general attitude of women who are more or less influenced in their life planning by potential marriage. The only way in which the talented or educated woman can commit herself whole-heartedly to any business or profession is either to stamp out the very thought of marriage, which is difficult if not impossible and likely to hurt her personality, or to know that, even though she marries, it is possible for her to continue her employment if she so desires.

If social tradition insists that women who marry surrender all out-of-the-home ambition, marriage is made inaccessible to them and society must expect other consequences than their giving up of the hope of marriage. Unwilling to make the sacrifice demanded as an entrance to marriage, they seek substitutes and find in free love, temporary alliances, and irresponsible unions a partial compensation for their abandonment of the thought of marriage.<sup>3</sup> One of the most fruitful efforts that have been made to help women escape the dilemma of choice between a career and marriage with or without motherhood is the work of the Institute for the Coördination of Women's Interests, inaugurated by Mrs. Ethel Puffer Howes, who brought to her undertaking an extraordinary background of personal talent and experience. She tackled the problem at both ends, attempting to help women find a way to make their household tasks a means of using the resources their intellectual training had given them, and also seeking to discover the conditions which would enable women to continue in their chosen profession after marriage without sacrifice of family experience or motherhood. Her investigations, carried on in connection with Smith College, are best defined in her own words:

Our project was essentially one for giving reality and solidity to the so-called higher education of women. Its purpose was stated concretely

<sup>3</sup> Floyd Dell, *Love in the Machine Age*, p. 141.

at the time of installation as the effort to meet the need of women so to order their lives that their individual powers and interests, developed by education, should not, in the pressure of normal family life, be diffused or dulled. It was recognized that, as households and occupations now operate, constant needless interruptions on the one side, and the rigid, narrow lines of professions on the other, result in a shocking waste not only of splendid human endowment but of large amounts of money actually invested in bringing these endowments to the point of productiveness. Moreover, the principal source of this waste lay in the lack of a reasoned principle for her actions, on the part of the woman herself.

In the words of our original prospectus, "A new psychology of action is called for, that shall integrate the woman's normal family life with a genuine continuous intellectual interest, and thus conserve the attainments and powers reached in the work of the college."<sup>4</sup>

**Housekeeping and domestic adjustment.** One way of lessening the urge of the ambitious married woman to enter employment out of the home, without increasing the vocational significance of home-making, is by giving attention to housekeeping as it is related to domestic adjustment. Even if the wife takes over all the labor connected with household management, the housekeeping program still remains a significant form of domestic adjustment in which the husband is as much concerned as his wife. Everything relating to home-making deserves consideration as an influence upon domestic adjustment, and much of the planning should be done through conference of husband and wife. The community, the neighborhood, the size and type of house, its furniture, decorations, equipment, especially that of the kitchen, the planning of the menu, the weekly work schedule, the division of time, are outstanding matters that ought not to be thought of as merely problems of the housewife.

Many wives become discontented not because housework and family responsibilities are actually distasteful, but because of inadequate background through lack of training in household technique or the feeling that their service is unappreciated on account of the husband's lack of knowledge of what is involved in caring for a house, or because through lack of equipment and resources the housekeeping becomes mere toil with no opportunity for pride or a sense of achievement.

<sup>4</sup> *The Progress of the Institute for the Coördination of Women's Interests.* p. 8 (pamphlet).



These situations do not just happen nor are they necessarily the result of low economic income or material circumstances that cannot be improved. The fundamental cause of trouble in instances not a few is a failure of the wife or the husband, or both, to realize the domestic significance of an efficient, well-organized household program as a means of domestic adjustment.

It should be taken for granted in the modern home that the major housekeeping problems concern the husband as certainly as they do the wife. The wise man will at least gather experience enough to permit him to care for the family in emergencies. Even wealthy men when confronted with the death or the prolonged illness of the wife have found need of the knowledge of household management, and in the middle class the ability of the man to cook simple dishes, to take charge of the child, to administer first aid when children are hurt, yields high dividends in family happiness in times of emergency. The sick wife or the woman who needs a vacation is freer from anxiety when she knows that her incapacity or absence does not mean complete disorganization of the family, because the husband can step into the breach. Surely this is not too much to ask of the husband as a temporary expediency in view of the fact that there are a multitude of women who carry continuously the double burden of family responsibilities and out-of-the-home employment.

**Housekeeping a retarded occupation.** In spite of a rather general improvement during the last decade in household equipment and technique, housekeeping as a vocation is relatively retarded, and its backwardness antagonizes domestic adjustment along other lines. The tired, financially harassed, or inferiority-feeling housewife makes a poor sex partner, an unstable mother and a disappointing companion.

Even household architecture is relatively backward. This is the assertion of architects themselves. Housekeeping is carried on under conditions established in the past with little adaptation to modern needs; and inadequate household architecture is by no means confined to old dwellings, for even new construction reveals surprisingly often an inadequacy which hampers home-making. The family has to conform to the house rather than the house being adapted to the needs of the family. Bad housing has come to signify unwholesome sanitation. This reveals how little attention has been given the housing

side of domestic adjustment, even the needs of the young child being commonly neglected in the architecture and furnishing of a home.<sup>5</sup>

**Housekeeping not a class problem.** In discussing the problem of family management as related to domestic adjustment, it is inevitable that the ambitious woman who faces a dilemma in marriage should draw attention. She finds herself exactly as a man would be if by marrying he had to give up all hope of continuing his business or profession or had to attempt the strain of going on as formerly while adding considerable new responsibility connected with home-making.

The fact that the highly trained women facing this problem has been most articulate in their protest or in their enthusiasm over having found a solution must not give the impression that these are the only women in trouble. Even the woman who has neither the inclination nor an enticing opportunity to go out of the home as a paid worker may find housekeeping a burden which disturbs her feeling of family loyalty. It is, of course, true that vocational dissatisfaction is found also among men and that they likewise have to struggle against an irksome routine. Even so, however consequential this may be indirectly upon their family life, it is not the clear outcome of a family situation as so often seems to be the fact when the woman is overburdened by household care. It is also true that frequently if husband and wife faced squarely in a coöperative spirit the household problem, much of its vexation would disappear.

#### *Case 31*

To-day's mail brings a violent expression of protest from a housewife who clearly cannot be placed within the group of women who seek a career. She, however, wishes to exchange her household labor for some out-of-the-family employment and she confesses that she has lost all her affection for her husband whom she blames for indifference to the hardness of her life. A few of her sentences illustrate the feeling of the non-ambitious woman who finds household cares too much for her. "Please help me find some kind of adjustment by answering my questions. I am miserably unhappy, having had to give up a good job which I had before I married. What can a married woman be proud of? How can she be happy when she gives up an honorable paying job for nasty, back-breaking, dirty drudgery without being paid or appreciated? I am not proud of the

<sup>5</sup> See Report of the Home Problem Conference, held at Merrill Palmer School, April, 1927, pp. 19-32.

fact that I am a misfit. Why not condemn all married men to chop wood or break stones the rest of their lives because they married? It is just as fair as to condemn all women to housework. My husband makes about \$2,000 a year. Am I not entitled to enough of that to relieve me of shoveling coal, taking out ashes, doing washing and the rest of Negro work? I can never be happy doing the work that I have been carrying on twelve years. I must reclaim myself by finding work on the outside. Other married women find jobs and make as much as \$1,400 a year. Why can't I? What is the good of being a woman? What do they get out of life? Where is their joy? I love my two children but I hate being a mother, and I shall never have another child if I can do anything to prevent it."

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## CHAPTER XXII

### BIRTH CONTROL

One of the first decisions that modern young people have to make upon entering marriage is their policy regarding birth control. Indeed, this is a matter which in justice to both should be discussed before the wedding, that there may be a mutual understanding regarding the program after marriage. It is hardly possible for the American young man or woman to avoid facing the problem of birth control and defining his or her attitude toward it. It has become not only one of the most important of all the problems related to individual happiness, it also supremely concerns society itself. It is a subject which no book that attempts to interpret conditions influencing domestic adjustment can avoid.

At the present time there is nothing of importance to marriage about which there is so much controversy as birth control. This is true in the United States, but it is not confined to this country. The idea of birth control has spread widely, and in some countries it is already practiced to such an extent that it has to be thought of as a world problem and one of supreme significance. Concerning its importance there is no disagreement, for both the opponents and the advocates of birth control insist that it is something of greatest concern to the individual and to the state. They differ only regarding its results in personal and social happiness. It has a direct influence on population which many thinkers regard the supreme problem of civilization.<sup>1</sup> The ramifications of birth control are many, entering into every phase of human interest. This discussion must limit itself to birth control as related to marriage, but even when so restricted it cannot be treated narrowly because of the variety of ways in which it has significance for marriage.

As an idea or as something desired, birth control is not new but goes back to very ancient times.<sup>2</sup> Birth control in the form of *coitus*

<sup>1</sup> R. W. Kelso, *Poverty*, p. 338; East, *Mankind at the Crossroads*, Chap. 4; E. R. Moore, *Case Against Birth Control*, Chap. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Genesis*, Chap. 9, vs. 10.

*interruptus* has been found by anthropologists prevalent among primitive people who appear not to have had contact with civilization, and it is believed by some that it goes back to a period preceding society. We now know that in certain savage tribes, particularly in Africa, the idea of contraception prevailed and that in some instances at least there was a degree of success in preventing fertilization. In many more cases dependence was put upon magical practices that were of course ineffectual.<sup>3</sup> There is evidence that useless as were most of the means taken by primitive people to prevent conception there were some that were efficacious.<sup>4</sup>

It would be, however, an exaggeration of fact to interpret the numerous cases found among savage tribes of attempts to prevent conception as evidence of a birth control program or even a population policy deliberate and conscious. No problem was more serious for primitive people than that of over-population, but there is nothing to suggest that the means they employed to prevent this, such as infanticide, war, abortion, and various forms of marriage regulation and sex taboo were consciously chosen for the purpose of keeping down the population.<sup>5</sup>

As every reader of this book realizes, there is at present an intense controversy regarding birth control. Not only are there differences of opinion as to the social consequences of birth control practices, there is in addition a far deeper reason for disagreement in the two opposite attitudes toward its morality. It is not merely a question of expediency. The fundamental issue between those favoring and those opposing birth control is ethical in character.

For this reason those contemplating marriage should make their decision regarding birth control deliberately, with an understanding of the meaning of the present controversy. They should not unthinkingly drift into the practice or the avoidance of birth control methods. It is the purpose of this discussion to interpret the birth control problem in a way that will encourage thinking, so that each reader may come to a decision regarding a supremely important question and may have the background necessary to appreciate the nature of the problem. A text such as this cannot be made an instrument of propa-

<sup>3</sup> A. M. Carr-Saunders, *Population Problems*, pp. 177-78 and 186-87.

<sup>4</sup> Carr-Saunders, *Ibid.*, p. 177; Herbert Aptekar, "In Anthropological Perspective," *Birth Control Review*, Vol. IV, No. 7, p. 218.

<sup>5</sup> Nathan Miller, *The Child in Primitive Society*, pp. 28-50.

ganda for or against birth control nor an interpretation in any detail of the two conflicting points of view, but the reader has the right to expect an impartial representation of the significance birth control has in marriage experience, including its history, its present status, and the questions it has brought forward.

**The meaning of birth control.** The term *birth control* is American in origin, having been used first by Margaret Sanger. It has proved a happy choice so far as popularizing the idea is concerned, but it has been, and still is, the cause of much misunderstanding. The term has led to misinterpretations. On the part of some it has been considered a synonym for abortion while it has led others to suppose that science already has an absolute control of conception, so that by the use of birth control methods no undesired pregnancy will ever occur. Birth control has nothing to do with abortion and it is not yet true that science has found a substitute for sterilization, the only perfect method of preventing conception. Birth control, thus far at least, is a relative limitation of offspring, not an absolute prevention of unwanted fertilization.

Even from this more narrow point of view the term birth control is not entirely accurate in its connotation. It is not the exclusive method of limiting offspring and because of this those who are hostile to the idea of using what is popularly known as birth control are charged with an unwillingness to restrict birth. The issue is not between absolute license of parenthood and birth control but rather between two different methods of controlling birth.

Those who are in favor of using artificial methods of birth control, properly called contraception, are on the one side while on the other are those who, acknowledging cases in which children ought not to be born, insist that the only proper means of bringing this about is continence—the abstinence of husband and wife from sex relations. It is not concerning the question whether there should be birth control but as to the means that are right and wise for accomplishing this limitation of offspring that the present disagreement comes about. The majority of opponents of contraception generally are willing to go still farther and grant that it is entirely proper to decrease or prevent conception by limiting intercourse to a definite period of the month in which they assume that conception is not likely to happen. It is the arbitrary artificial means of birth control which they consider morally wrong and socially detrimental. So long as recourse

is not had to unnatural means of protecting the wife from fertilization, no moral issue is involved. This, as we shall see, is the position taken by the Roman Catholic Church and by many Protestants who at this point agree with its teaching. Those who favor contraception recognize no essential difference in the methods used except that those known as contraceptive methods are nervously and physically un-harmful, more efficacious, and less likely to interfere with marriage satisfaction.

**The increase of contraceptive practices.** There is general agreement that there is at present an extensive use of contraceptive methods of birth control and that the knowledge and employment of such methods are constantly increasing. There are no reliable statistics as to how large a part of our population is making use of contraception in the effort to limit offspring, but we have information that convinces one that contraceptive attempts to avoid parenthood are made for a period at least by a large proportion of those who are married in this country. It has been estimated that the production of one contraceptive device used by the male is being carried on at the rate of five million or more each working day and that this device is used in the United States to the extent of some twenty-seven million weekly.<sup>6</sup> Dr. Hamilton found in his study of 100 women that six of them were sterile and that eighty-seven used contraceptives. Dr. Katharine Davis in her study of a thousand women reports that 734 believed in the principle of voluntary parenthood and 730, or 74.11 of the total number, had themselves used contraceptive methods.<sup>7</sup> Dickinson and Beam found of the 532 cases in which they obtained information only 25 women who declared that they and their husbands had never used any form of control of parenthood. In 507 cases either some method was used or this was unnecessary because of lack of fertility or sterilization.<sup>8</sup>

There can be no doubt, as many have pointed out, that contraception is practiced more in the professional and higher economic classes than among those commonly designated as the working people. The Lynds, in their classic study of Middletown, give us data to confirm this general opinion. All of the twenty-seven business women who gave information either believed in the use of contraception or em-

<sup>6</sup> E. R. Moore, *Case Against Birth Control*, p. 187.

<sup>7</sup> *Factors in the Sex Life of Twenty-two Hundred Women*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>8</sup> R. L. Dickinson and L. Beam, *A Thousand Marriages*, pp. 248-249.



ployed it themselves, or both believed in it and employed it. Only one confessed that she was uncertain whether she had been wise in limiting her family. On the other hand, corresponding information was given by seventy-seven wives of workers with the following result: Thirty-four admitted that they used some means of control. Only twenty of these used methods that the authors described as moderately scientific, and only ten used the methods commonly found in professional classes. Of the other forty-three, fifteen vaguely approved contraception but did not make use of it, thinking it unnecessary in their particular cases, fifteen disapproved, four were ignorant of all contraceptives except those their husbands were unwilling to use, and nine desired some means of control but did not know how they might accomplish their purposes.<sup>9</sup> The following is the situation among the successful marriages I have studied.

	<i>Husband and Wife Reporting</i>		<i>Husband Only Re- porting</i>		<i>Wife Only Re- porting</i>			
	<i>Husband</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>Husband</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>Husband</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>Husband</i>	<i>Wife</i>
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Have you practiced birth control? . . .	47	5	49	3	38	8	40	11
Has it hurt your marital relations? . .	4	46	1	47	..	46	2	37
Has it hurt your physical health? . . .	..	46	1	45	1	37	..	40
Has method used been successful? . .	35	8	36	11	35	2	36	2
Has it decreased your pleasure in sex relations? (Asked of men only) . .	12	34	..	..	16	22	..	..

**The history of contraception.** In 1798 there appeared in England the first edition of an essay on population, written by Thomas Robert Malthus, an English clergyman interested in economics and keenly sensitive to the problem of destitution widespread among working classes at that time. The essay seems to have resulted from a debate of Malthus with his father as to the cause of the great amount of poverty. As is generally true, this pioneering discussion was not original in the sense that it was utterly unrelated to all preceding thought,<sup>10</sup> but it was distinctive because it brought into social consciousness the problem of population as of major consequence to human society, and it indirectly became the source of the contraceptive

<sup>9</sup> R. S. and H. M. Lynd, *Middletown*, p. 123.

<sup>10</sup> H. G. Duncan, *Race and Population Problems*, pp. 222-224.

idea and agitation. In the second edition of 1803 the author introduced the notion of prudential check and late marriages to limit the birth rate, and eighteen years later James Mill wrote in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "The grand practical problem therefore is to find the means of limiting the number of births." Francis Place, one of the greatest of all English labor reformers, became interested in the problem of population. In 1822 he published a book entitled *Illustrations of Proofs of the Principle of Population*. A year later a small leaflet written for the married of both sexes, declaring that excessively large families led to poverty and describing clearly such hygienic methods of preventing the undesired pregnancy as were at that time known, was circulated in Manchester, England. This was known as "The Diabolical Handbill," and Place was credited with its authorship. Place continued to advocate birth control, and for years his name was seldom mentioned even in print without some deprecatory or abusive reference made to his notorious advocacy of contraception.<sup>11</sup> In 1825 there appeared in London a book entitled *Every Woman's Book*, written by Richard Carlile, which advocated birth control. Five years later United States Senator Robert Dale Owen, in his *Moral Physiology*, became the first in this country to advocate the practice of contraception. About this time the birth rate began declining in France as a consequence of its increasing use of artificial birth control practices. In 1833 a book was published in Boston, called *Fruits of Philosophy*, describing contraceptive methods. It was written by Dr. Charles Knowlton. In 1854 Dr. George Drysdale published in London *The Elements of Social Science*, which for the first time presented the idea of contraception from the economic, medical, and philosophic points of view. In 1869 through the efforts of Anthony Comstock, of the Society for the Suppression of Vice, contraception as a means of birth control was included in the obscenity law passed by the legislature of New York. Four years later Comstock influenced Congress to exclude information concerning contraception from the United States mails and to declare such information illegal and obscene. In 1877 Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant distributed in England 185,000 copies of Dr. Knowlton's *Fruits of Philosophy*. They were tried for circulating indecent literature but were not convicted. Edward Trulove, a London publisher, was not so fortunate when a year later he

<sup>11</sup> Graham Wallas, *The Life of Francis Place*, p. 169.

was imprisoned and fined for selling Robert Dale Owen's *Moral Physiology*. This same year the first birth control clinic in the world was opened in Amsterdam, Holland, by Dr. Aletta Jacobs. This resulted in the popularizing of birth control among the poor of Holland. In 1900 the First International Neo-Malthusian Conference was held in Paris.

In 1912 Margaret Sanger, a visiting nurse in the East Side of New York City, became interested in scientific birth control as practiced in France and two years later coined the term *birth control*. At this time the first American birth control organization was formed. In this same year Margaret Sanger was arrested and indicted, under the Federal Statute passed in 1873, for advocating birth control. The case was dropped two years later. The next year William Sanger was arrested for giving out a pamphlet written by Mrs. Sanger on Family Limitation and was sentenced to serve thirty days in jail. The next year Margaret Sanger herself and two others were arrested for opening a birth control clinic but were released by the governor of the State of New York at the end of eleven days. In 1917 she was imprisoned for thirty days for opening the first American birth control clinic. The case was appealed and in 1918 Judge Crane of the New York Court of Appeals gave the decision that legally practicing physicians can give contraceptive advice for the protection of health and the prevention of disease. In 1920 a law was passed in France forbidding the giving of information concerning contraception. In 1921 a Mothers' Clinic for Constructive Birth Control was established by Marie Stopes in London, and the next year a birth control clinic was started by the Malthusian League of London. That same year the First International Conference on Contraceptive Devices was held in Amsterdam, Holland, and in the fall of the same year the First American Birth Control Conference was held in New York City. Public meetings which had been announced in connection with this conference were prohibited by the police.

In 1923 birth control educational centers were started in Vienna; in three years these had grown to the number of thirty. In 1924 two birth control centers opened in Copenhagen, Denmark, one in Norway at Christiania, and one in Sweden at Stockholm. The following year the National Council of Public Morals in England made an unfavorable report on birth control but advised further investigation. Among those who announced their support of birth control during this

year were the Bishop of Birmingham, in England, Rabindranath Tagore of India, and President Calles of Mexico, whose Labor government carried on a birth control clinic. Clinics were also established in Tokio and Osaka, Japan. In the same year Italy passed a law against contraception. The following year the British House of Commons voted against contraceptive instruction at welfare centers, while a similar bill introduced in the House of Lords was carried by a small majority. In this same year a birth control clinic was opened in Leningrad, Russia. In 1927 the First World Population Conference, organized by Margaret Sanger, was held at Geneva, Switzerland. The following year the first birth control clinic was opened in Germany. In 1929 a Clinical Research Bureau, carried on by the American Birth Control League, was raided in New York City. The case was dismissed. In Ireland in 1930 the most drastic measure against birth control was enacted by the Irish Free State. In 1930 the Seventh National Birth Control Conference was held in Switzerland. In this brief sketch of the evolution of the contraception movement the attitude of the churches has been omitted, because on account of its importance it requires separate treatment.

**Churches and contraception.** The religious leadership of Europe and America has until recently been consistently opposed to contraceptive methods of birth control. The churches and the clergy, Protestant, Jewish, and Roman Catholic, as soon as the idea of artificial limitation of offspring appeared, were steadfast in their hostility to it. This still remains largely true although of late there has been a decided change in attitude among Protestants and Jews in this country. The position of the Roman Catholic Church, as voiced by its authorized leaders from the Pope to the humblest priest, has remained unaltered.<sup>12</sup> The position of the Roman Catholic Church has been stated with precision and clarity by Dr. John M. Cooper. He declares that its attitude is not a mere matter of ecclesiastical regulation such as laws regarding fasting during Lent. It is not something instituted by the church law. It is a command of divine origin from which there can be no appeal, and the church has no authority to set it aside, but only the responsibility of insisting upon obedience to the divine decree. "Artificial prevention of conception is ever and always gravely sinful just as adultery is."<sup>13</sup> In 1908 the Lambeth Conference of

<sup>12</sup> See Rev. A. D. Garvie's *The Control of Parenthood*, pp. 167-173.

<sup>13</sup> John M. Cooper, *Birth Control*, p. 8.



Bishops of the Anglican Church declared their opposition to contraception in the following words:

The Conference regards with alarm the growing practice of the artificial restriction of the family, and earnestly calls upon all Christian people to discourage the use of all artificial means of restriction as demoralizing to character, and hostile to the national welfare.<sup>14</sup>

The grounds of religious disapproval of contraception are variously expressed, but the chief objections made are the following: First, contraception violates the will of God and the intention of nature, which expresses His will, by frustrating the purpose of marriage. Marriage is turned from its primary function, procreation, to personal pleasure which should be subordinate and secondary. Contraception, therefore, destroys the divine purpose of marriage, and there is scriptural evidence of God's disapproval.<sup>15</sup> Second, contraception encourages the dominance of physical passion over spiritual values and moral self-control, leading to self-indulgence in and out of marriage. Third, it degrades marriage to a selfish pursuing of personal pleasure and deprives the husband and wife of the moral growth that comes from spiritualizing their relationship and accepting the responsibility of parenthood when children come. It undermines love by degrading domestic comradeship through animal passion while at the same time it develops egoistic attitudes in place of mutual sympathy and sacrifice. Fourth, it especially hurts the status of the wife because preventing her motherhood takes away from the male the reverence for womanhood without which there cannot be genuine affection.<sup>16</sup>

The Roman Catholic position has authoritatively been expressed by Pope Pius XI in his Encyclical. Following are excerpts from this pronouncement:

When we consider the great excellence of chaste wedlock, venerable brethren, it appears all the more regrettable that particularly in our day we should witness this divine institution often scorned and on every side degraded. . . .

<sup>14</sup> Willystine Goodsell, *Problems of the Family*, p. 358.

<sup>15</sup> *Genesis*, Chap. 38.

<sup>16</sup> C. P. Bruehl, *Birth Control and Eugenics*, Chap. 2; John M. Cooper, *Birth Control*, Chaps. 2, 3, and 4, and Edgar Schmiedeler, *Introductory Study of the Family*, pp. 173-181. Since the Roman Catholic position is based upon the Church's conception of marriage, the student should also read P. J. Gannon, *Holy Matrimony*, Chaps. 1, 2, and 3.

First consideration is due to the offspring, which many have the boldness to call the disagreeable burden of matrimony and which they say is to be carefully avoided by married people not through virtuous continence (which Christian law permits in matrimony when both parties consent) but by frustrating the marriage act. Some justify this criminal abuse on the ground that they are weary of children and wish to gratify their desires without their consequent burden. Others say that they cannot, on the one hand, remain continent nor on the other can they have children because of the difficulties whether on the part of the mother or on the part of family circumstances.

But no reason however grave may be put forward by which anything intrinsically against nature may become conformable to nature and morally good. Since, therefore, the conjugal act is destined primarily by nature for the begetting of children, those who in exercising it deliberately frustrate its natural power and purpose, sin against nature and commit a deed which is shameful and intrinsically vicious. . . .

Any use whatsoever of matrimony exercised in such a way that the act is deliberately frustrated in its natural power to generate life is an offense against the law of God and of nature, and those who indulge in such are branded with the guilt of a grave sin.

As regards the evil use of matrimony—to pass over the arguments which are shameful ones—not infrequently others that are false and exaggerated are put forward. Holy Mother Church very well understands and clearly appreciates all that is said regarding the health of the mother and the danger to her life. And who would not grieve to think of these things? Who is not filled with the greatest admiration when he sees a mother risking her life with heroic fortitude, that she may preserve the life of the offspring which she has conceived? God alone, all bountiful and all merciful as He is, can reward her for the fulfillment of the office allotted to her by nature, and will assuredly repay her in a measure full to overflowing. . . .

We are deeply touched by the sufferings of those parents who, in extreme want, experience great difficulty in rearing their children. However, they should take care lest the calamitous state of their external affairs should be the occasion for a much more calamitous error. . . .

But another very grave crime is to be noted, venerable brethren, which regards the taking of the life of the offspring hidden in the mother's womb. Some wish it to be allowed and left to the will of the father or the mother, others say it is unlawful unless there are weighty reasons which they call by the name of medical, social or eugenic "indication."

As to the "medical and therapeutic indication" to which, using their own words, we have made reference, venerable brethren, however much we may

pity the mother whose health and even life is gravely imperiled in the performance of the duty allotted to her by nature, nevertheless what could ever be a sufficient reason for excusing in any way the direct murder of the innocent? This is precisely what we are dealing with here. Whether inflicted upon the mother or upon the child it is against the precept of God and the law of nature: "Thou shalt not kill"; the life of each is equally sacred, and no one has the power, not even the public authority, to destroy it. . . .

In the last decade there have developed differences of opinion among the Protestant and Jewish church leadership, with an increasing tendency to regard the moral problem of contraception one of abuse rather than of use. In 1929, for example, the Central Conference of American Rabbis urged recognition of the importance of birth control and recommended its study during the following year. In the same year the Church of England at the Lambeth Conference of the House of Bishops endorsed the use of contraceptives under certain conditions compatible with Christian principles, and the Presbyterian General Assembly's Special Committee on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage approved contraceptive measures for restricting birth under medical advice. In this year the Universalists' General Conference adopted the report of its committee on Birth Control which included this statement: .

This committee finds that Birth Control is one of the most practicable means of race betterment, and hereby recommends:

1. That this Convention urge the immediate repeal of such federal and state laws as interfere with the prescription of contraception by physicians; and
2. That where legal barriers do not exist, socially minded persons be urged to establish in every center of population clinics where those needing it may receive contraceptive advice under medical supervision.<sup>17</sup>

The Central Conference of American Rabbis adopted the report of its Social Justice Commission at its Convention in Detroit, June, 1929:

Recognizing the need of exercising great caution in dealing with the delicate and complicated problem of birth regulation in view of the widespread

<sup>17</sup> *Birth Control Review*, p. 150, May, 1930.

dissolution of the old sanctions affecting the institution of marriage and the ties of family life; earnestly desiring to guard against playing into the hands of those who would undermine the dignity and sanctity of these precious bonds through reckless notions and practices having to do with sex relations; especially mindful of the noble tradition obtaining among the Jewish people with respect to the holiness and the crucial importance of domestic relations; but realizing at the same time the many serious evils caused by uncontrolled parenthood among those who lack the prerequisites of health and a reasonable measure of economic resources and intelligence to give to their children the heritage to which they are entitled;

We, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, urge the recognition of the importance of the control of parenthood as one of the methods of coping with social problems:

We furthermore recommend to the executive board of the Central Conference of American Rabbis that a portion of next year's program be devoted to one or more papers on this subject.<sup>18</sup>

This report was adopted.

In 1930 the New York East Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church adopted the report of its Social Service Committee which contained the following statement:

In the interest of morality and sound scientific knowledge we favor such changes of the law in the States of New York and Connecticut as will remove the existing restrictions upon the communication by physicians to their patients of important medical information on Birth Control.<sup>19</sup>

The most important pronouncement about contraception reflecting the new attitude of Protestantism appeared in 1931 in the report of the Committee on Marriage and the Home, of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. This consists of a majority declaration of approval signed by 22 members and opposed by three, the remaining three members of the committee not voting.<sup>20</sup> The difference of opinion appears in sections two and three of this report, the minority stating in part:

In view of the widespread doubt among Christian people of the morality of the use of contraceptives, and the scruples experienced by many in mak-

<sup>18</sup> *Loc. cit.*, p. 149.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> See *Current History*, April, 1931, pp. 97-100.



ing use of them, it appears to these members of the committee to be the plain duty of the Christian Church, when control of conception is necessary, to uphold the standard of abstinence as the ideal, recognizing it as a counsel of perfection, and that Christian morals are much more exalted than is generally supposed. But they would point out that the grace of God is sufficient for those who are conscious of a difficult and high vocation; and that we have as yet but touched the fringes of spiritual power which is all about us like God's gifts of air and sunshine. Those who adventure and trust are rewarded, and they know the joy and strength which accompany all victories of the spirit.<sup>21</sup>

**Legislation regarding contraception.** The federal law which prohibits the publishing of information as to contraceptive methods and the transportation of devices or material for contraceptive purposes was passed in 1873 as the result of agitation carried on by Anthony Comstock, a reformer who at that time represented the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice.

In 1909 Congress passed another act forbidding the importation or inter-state transportation of any drug, medicine, article, or thing designed, adapted, or intended for preventing conception. In the traffic act of 1922 the importation of all drugs, medicines, and all articles whatever for the prevention of conception was prohibited.

These federal laws have led to constant and in recent years increasing agitation. Those who oppose the legislation are divided into two groups, one desiring to strike out all reference to contraception in the obscenity laws, while the other advocates changing the legislation so that persons scientifically trained may be permitted to give instruction in contraception. The intent of this group is to remove restriction from physicians, nurses, and midwives. In 1930 Frederick Gillette of Massachusetts introduced in the Senate a bill designed to give legal freedom to physicians.

Hearings were held by a sub-committee of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, at which individuals favoring and opposing the proposed legislation appeared. The following year at the expiration of the 71st Congress the bill died, not having been reported from the committee.

The legal status of contraceptive information in the various states

<sup>21</sup> "Birth Control: Protestant View," *Current History*, April, 1931, pp. 99-100.

is at present confused and there are different interpretations as to the right of physicians to give contraceptive advice.<sup>22</sup> A study made by W. J. McWilliams of the laws of New York concerning birth control and the court decisions reveals the uncertainty of the situation, and similar confusion exists in many other states. In her compilation of laws concerning contraception Margaret Sanger lists thirty-one states in which it is legal for physicians to give information.<sup>23</sup> Moore declares that only seven states—Colorado, Indiana, Minnesota, Nevada, New York, Ohio, and Wyoming—make exceptions in favor of physicians giving or prescribing contraceptive information.<sup>24</sup> According to the *Congressional Digest*, the situation in the several states is as follows:

I. Thirty-one States where physicians may legally give information on prevention of conception:

Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming.

II. Four doubtful States:

Connecticut, Kansas, Massachusetts, New Jersey.

III. Eleven States where physicians may legally give information on prevention of conception but cannot publish such information:

Arizona, California, Idaho, Maine, Michigan, Montana, Pennsylvania, Washington, Louisiana, Missouri, Nevada.

IV. Two States where physicians may legally give information on prevention of conception for cure and prevention of disease:

Minnesota, New York.

V. State where physicians may not give information on prevention of conception:

Mississippi.<sup>25</sup>

It must be remembered that the status of contraception cannot be determined merely by the absence of state legislation on the subject. There may be even in such states municipal regulations which in

<sup>22</sup> William J. McWilliams, *Federal and New York State Laws on Contraception*, published by the National Committee on Maternal Health, Inc., 1930.

<sup>23</sup> Laws Concerning Birth Control in the United States.

<sup>24</sup> E. R. Moore, *The Case Against Birth Control*, p. 223.

<sup>25</sup> *Congressional Digest*, p. 101.

definite localities prohibit giving contraceptive advice.<sup>26</sup> The law of Colorado forbidding the importation of contraceptive knowledge is credited with making it illegal for a physician with knowledge of contraceptive technique to travel through the state on a journey from California to New York. The law of Connecticut makes the use of contraceptive devices not illegal. In New York State, under section 1142 of the penal code, it is not unlawful to use contraceptives or to possess them with no intent to distribute, while under section 1143 it is unlawful to carry them in any manner.<sup>27</sup> In this legal confusion regarding the status of contraception there appears to be general agreement that the legal prohibitions, where they exist, are laxly enforced; indeed, seldom is any effort made to enforce them. It is also the opinion of many that the statutes are unenforceable.<sup>28</sup> In spite of a widespread nullification of the anti-contraceptive clause in the United States, those who favor liberal legislation insist that the present legal situation leads to class discrimination, hampering the giving of information to the poorer economic groups who need it most while the professional and well-to-do easily obtain the knowledge desired regarding effective contraceptive technique.

**So-called "Safe Period."** Many who morally object to the use of contraception are not opposed to the limiting of offspring by the regulation of intercourse so that it occurs at a time when the fertility of the woman is low. In his Encyclical Letter of December 30, 1930, Pope Pius XI declared:

Nor are those considered as acting against nature who in the married state use their right in the proper manner although on account of natural reasons either of time or of certain defects new life cannot be brought forth.<sup>29</sup>

Such a method of lessening birth is ethical because the normal processes of nature are not interfered with and nature herself is regarded as responsible for the non-appearance of pregnancy. But, as Moore so clearly shows, there is no such thing as an absolutely safe period;

<sup>26</sup> George Packard, "Is Birth Control Legal?" *Birth Control Review*, September, 1931, pp. 248-250.

<sup>27</sup> W. J. McWilliams, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>28</sup> See "Symposium on Nullification and Repeal," *Birth Control Review*, October, 1930.

<sup>29</sup> E. R. Moore, *Case Against Birth Control*, p. 42.

it is merely that at a certain time the probability of pregnancy is less and, as he states, this program is likely to omit marital relationship at the time when it is most desired by the woman and bring it at a period when it is least wished or even distinctly repugnant.<sup>30</sup> Dickinson, from his study and evaluation of available data concerning the safe period, writes as follows:

1. There is no time in the month at which conception has not occurred in some women.
2. The premenstrual week constitutes the relatively "safe period," or "low-risk period," when the average chance of pregnancy is less than one in ten.
3. A "safe period" or sterile part of the cycle is present in every woman, but is a matter for individual tests, and such successful tests are not yet effectively transferable from animals. Nor has any series been studied that is made up of adequate case records of women with known "safe periods."<sup>31</sup>

Another birth control method which is approved by Roman Catholic leadership, and by Protestants who object to contraception, is relative or absolute continence in the married state, when adopted for conscientious reasons. There is no immorality in birth control based upon self-control.<sup>32</sup> This is not considered any easy solution, but on the other hand it is from the point of view of its advocates not an impossible idea nor one contrary to good health. John M. Cooper considers the possibility of continence leading to some physical harm in the super-sexed when there exists an underlying pathological, emotional condition, but insists that the evidence of this is not at present conclusive. Even if it were proved that some psychic harm might result from self-control on the part of exceptional but normally stable individuals, they are duty bound to surrender a personal interest for the greater good of the social group.<sup>33</sup>

It must be recognized that continence even in families in which contraceptive methods are approved and used is frequently demanded under certain circumstances, such as just before and after the wife's childbirth, during the absences of husband or wife, during illnesses,

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>31</sup> Robert L. Dickinson, *The "Safe Period" as a Birth Control Measure*, published by the Committee on Maternal Health, p. 10.

<sup>32</sup> E. R. Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>33</sup> John M. Cooper, *Birth Control*, p. 76.



and at times when either the husband or the wife finds the other lacking in sex desire. Continence, however, within the marriage relationship extending over a long period of time as a means of birth control is regarded by the advocates of contraception an unnecessary and unwise nervous strain and an incentive to vice on the part of the husband or the wife, a detrimental influence upon normal sex vigor, a cause of psychic depression and of various forms of emotional conflict, and a source of risk of domestic friction and incompatibility. This position has been well summarized by Riese:

Even more unfavorable are the effects of continence when practiced for contraceptive purposes within the framework of married life. The constant physical nearness makes continence here an almost impossible task. We cannot endorse that form of sexual behavior and ethic, urged by certain religious groups, which on the one hand favors birth limitation and on the other advises abstinence as the only method for this purpose. Whenever mature and mated individuals have to or wish to prevent conception continence cannot be accepted as the method of choice. For that purpose contraceptive methods should be employed.<sup>34</sup>

**Medical status of contraception.** There is at present no unanimity of opinion in the field of medicine regarding contraception. This will not seem strange to those who understand the prevailing situation. Not only is it true that medical opinion shows great variability regarding many matters of health and curative technique, but in the particular realm of sex, disagreement of opinion is frequent. The reason is obvious. There is no part of human life about which we have such a scant amount of factual knowledge as sex in all its aspects, including the physical, the social, and the psychic. Nothing so shows the strength of the taboo which is by no means destroyed, although in recent years weakened, than the reluctance that the physician, the psychologist and the sociologist have shown to investigate the problems of the sex life of men and of women. It is true, as Davis has so well said, that sex, except on its pathological side, is scientifically an unexplored country.<sup>35</sup>

What is true of sex in general is, as one would expect, even more

<sup>34</sup> Margaret Sanger, *The Practice of Contraception*, p. 141. It is amazing to find Marie Stopes writing that there is trustworthy evidence that abstinence causes in women fibroid tumors. Marie Stopes, *Married Love*, p. 106.

<sup>35</sup> Katharine Davis, *Factors in the Sex Life of Twenty-two Hundred Women*, p. ix.

true regarding contraception. Opinions abound and are strongly expressed, but data of genuine scientific character are meager. The pronouncements of physicians range from the statement of Dr. F. J. McCann, that all methods of contraception are harmful to the female, differing only in being more or less so,<sup>36</sup> to the assertion of Dr. Dickinson, that the usual methods are harmless.<sup>37</sup> James F. Cooper states that in the five years of clinical experience no case has occurred in which there has been any injury from the use of any method prescribed at the clinic.<sup>38</sup>

As a matter of fact it is only of late that serious scientific effort has been made to discover the facts regarding the practice of contraception. Instead of unbiased, thoroughgoing, long-continued investigations we have had merely the declaration of eminent men in medicine who, without having especially studied the problem of contraception, dogmatized for or against it according to their emotional attitudes. It is fortunate that recently the medical profession has become more interested in the health problems connected with contraception and that there is a beginning of the realization that only through searching, unprejudiced study can the facts be had regarding the medical significance of contraception.

It is fair to say that at present there is general agreement that some contraceptive methods that have been used and are being used are harmful, if not in all cases, in at least a proportion of instances. Dickinson reports concerning one contraceptive method that he has seen twenty cases of injury, one death, two removals of the pelvic organs for disability and inflammation, and that several pregnancies occurred in women who were using it.<sup>39</sup> True as it is that doctors generally agree that some methods are harmful, this unanimity disappears just as soon as any particular form of contraception is condemned. Immediately testimony appears from others that it is harmless and that in their practice it has been proved safe.

In spite of the present confusion regarding contraceptive technique, a situation which would neither be exaggerated nor minimized, it is true that the general trend in the clinics in the United States is to

<sup>36</sup> E. R. Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>37</sup> Robert L. Dickinson, *The Control of Conception, Present and Future*, p. 17.

<sup>38</sup> James F. Cooper, *Technique of Contraception*, p. 188.

<sup>39</sup> Robert L. Dickinson, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

prescribe one method which they have come to regard as highly efficient and not injurious. Its popularity is not based entirely upon its efficiency and harmlessness, for it also has the advantage of being under the control of the woman so that she can feel certain of her own protection.<sup>40</sup>

In addition to the lack of agreement in medical literature on the harmfulness or harmlessness of contraceptive practices, we find differences of opinion also in regard to their efficacy. Here again there is general agreement that some methods of contraception, even though at present popular, are not highly successful. It is true also that the best methods require care in their use and an individual adaptation that can come only from a visit to the experienced physician, nurse, or clinic, and that the patient must be taught the proper technique. Successful contraception is not to be had by calling upon the neighborhood drug store. The efficacy of contraception must be judged under conditions that are in accord with present medical knowledge and technique.

Instruction in birth control methods under conditions approved by the specialist has a success that is now a matter of record. The clinics make an effort to follow their cases and their statistics are kept with the scrupulous care of medical professional ethics. It is the practice of the clinic to record as a failure any unwanted pregnancy, without reference to the circumstances and without taking into account the number of times the method was used in coitus without fertilization. Basing his report on the records of a thousand consecutive cases in 1925, Cooper tells us that the total pregnancies were 3.47 per cent.<sup>41</sup> Konikow reports that of the 391 women using the methods prescribed 95.4 per cent were successful and 4.6 per cent failed. However, six of these failures were admitted to be the result of carelessness or of neglect to use the method all the time, so that the record of failure based upon actual and conscientious use becomes 3.2 per cent, which the author regards a high percentage of failure when her technique is faithfully followed.

The Illinois League Report for the year 1924 to 1927 shows that of 1,087 who used the method advised 968 were successful and 119 had pregnancies. When analyzed this 119 is divided into the following groups: Wanting children, 3; not following instruction, 61;

<sup>40</sup> C. H. Robinson, *Seventy Birth Control Clinics*, p. 43.

<sup>41</sup> James F. Cooper, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

pregnancy before using, 1; uncertainty as to how to use, 38; claiming to have followed instruction, 16; total 119.<sup>42</sup> Robinson attempts to estimate the possible maximum failure on the basis of New York's clinic data, taking into account the unreported cases.<sup>43</sup> He considers 16 per cent failure the worst estimate that can be made and believes that four per cent failure, the record of the reported cases, represents the actual situation. Dickinson reports a study of 184 couples which has a special interest because they used various sorts of birth control methods, unlike the cases reported by the Birth Control Clinic. Forty-four, about one quarter, reported failure, but these had prevented conception during periods when they wished to and at other times had conceived according to their desire. They had not always been successful. The other 140 reported only deliberate conceptions at any time.<sup>44</sup> A just summary of existing facts seems to be that at present there is no method of birth control of a contraceptive nature that is guaranteed always to be successful, but that the degree of failure is at least no greater than the normal expectation in any form of medical technique. Among painstaking, adequately equipped and mutually co-operative couples contraceptive success is very nearly complete and at any time there may appear a contraceptive technique which, when followed, will have perfect success.

**Contraception and a desire for children.** Contraception, if practiced by those who desire not to become parents or who wish to limit the number of their children, naturally raises the question whether men and whether women desire children or whether, once contraception is popularized, race suicide will be the inevitable result. In regard to this question literature abounds in dogmatism and emotional reaction. Commonly there is insistence upon a generalized answer and a reluctance to admit that just as there are various types of men and women there are sure to be differences in the desire for children. It is at least usually admitted that there is no instinct that leads men and women irresistibly to parenthood. It is also clear that evidence cannot be gathered from the past regarding woman's wishes, because childbearing has formerly been one of the strongest of traditions from which even the modern woman has not so thoroughly escaped as to make any declaration concerning the desire for children

<sup>42</sup> Cooper, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

<sup>43</sup> C. H. Robinson, *Seventy Birth Control Clinics*.

<sup>44</sup> Robert L. Dickinson, *A Thousand Marriages*, p. 249.



certain to be free from social coercion. How strong the pressure has been in the past to lead women to childbirth has been brought out by Hollingworth, who shows in detail how social pressure has operated.<sup>45</sup>

Children are an increasing economic burden and to many parents a greater personal burden. Out of modern life are coming influences that tend to make men and women less willing parents and to make them feel that children limit their freedom or pleasure more than has been commonly true in the past. Under such circumstances there can be no general statement as to the attitude of men and women that has objective validity. We do know that social custom and personal experience in childhood and youth have in the past largely, if not exclusively, decided the attitude of the individual regarding possible parenthood. Society is rapidly coming to the new situation where there will be no effective pressure to make men and women accept parenthood unwillingly and when their determination not to become parents can be effectively carried out by an efficient contraceptive program. There are those who believe that under such circumstances we shall have to subsidize children as a necessary means of racial continuance.

Intimate contact with family situations convinces one that there are a variety of characteristic reactions of men and women to the question whether children are desired. Some do not have children but want them and finally adopt other people's children as a means of achieving happiness. Some have not wanted children but when they come find them the one source of happiness. Some have wanted children and, having them, have grown less rather than more happy. Some have children and get the satisfaction they expected. Not infrequently the husband and the wife have different attitudes. Sometimes it is the man who wants children, sometimes the woman, and again, both the man and the woman find happiness in their children or both the man and the woman find no happiness in their children. In such a medley of attitudes let him generalize who wishes. One thing at least seems reasonable. There is no evidence that all men and all women do not want children and that, once a free choice is possible, parenthood will come to an end.

As Popenoe has so well pointed out, there is a temptation that comes

<sup>45</sup> L. S. Hollingworth, "Social Devices for Impelling Women to Bear and Rear Children," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XXII, pp. 19-20.

to those who for economic or other personal motives temporarily adopt the contraceptive program. It is easy for them to drift to a non-parent destiny without intending to. This does not, however, prove that parenthood immediately after marriage is desirable but that care must be taken lest a temporary choice drift into a continuous postponement of pregnancy.

In any discussion of the effect of contraception upon potential parenthood, it is necessary to keep in mind that there are two distinct problems involved. One has to do with population, its quantity and its quality, while the other concerns the advantages or disadvantages of parenthood for the individuals in their family experience. Society has more at stake than the mere existence of a sufficient number of people or their eugenic distribution, so that children will be born of the biologically desirable rather than of the biologically undesirable classes. Society thus far has profited from the experiences that come from parenthood itself. Being a father or a mother has from the earliest age of primitive society contributed measurably to the socializing of individuals. This fact does not mean that every adult is obligated to become a parent or that all parents are so benefited by their experiences as to become better citizens. It does indicate that the intelligent married couple will consider not only the obligations and responsibilities of parenthood but also the opportunities it provides for personal growth and for the building of domestic sympathy. The menace of the present situation is too much reproduction at one social level and too little at another.

**Disputed effects of the practice of contraception.** It is the opinion of some medical specialists that the use of contraceptives tends to produce infertility. They find in their practice infertile women who have used some contraceptive method for a considerable time, and they believe that the lack of the power to reproduce is, in these women, the result of their birth control program. It is rare in such cases that the physician has knowledge that the women were fertile at an earlier period. Even were this true, however, present knowledge of the influences that act upon fertility is too uncertain to make tenable any assertion regarding the influence of contraception upon fertility. It seems reasonable to suppose that there are women who postponed having children in the earlier period of marriage, and who could at that time have conceived, who later are proved to be infertile. This by itself does not prove that the practice of contra-

ception is responsible, but only that the degree of fertility of the women changes. Contraception cannot be charged with the infertility until a causal relationship is clearly established.

Another matter upon which opinion is freely expressed is whether or not contraceptives tend to produce cancer and fibroid tumors. Here again some reputable medical authorities do not hesitate to assert that the practice of contraception tends to produce both malignant and benign tumors. Such assertions have the weight of opinion but cannot with our present knowledge be acceptable as demonstrated facts. We do not know as yet the cause or the cure of cancer. It is generally believed that any irritant encourages the appearance of cancer and it is reasonable to assume that any form of contraception which in practice irritates encourages the coming of cancer. In such instances it would be the irritation and not the contraceptive practice that would be held responsible. The question precisely stated is whether a given method of contraception does or does not in a particular instance cause irritation. It is the belief of James F. Cooper and others that some methods do irritate.<sup>46</sup>

In any discussion of the motives that impel to the use of contraception, the human proneness to rationalization must be recognized. This, of course, is encouraged at present by the rather common idea that the woman who does not choose to have children must defend herself and her motive. Even if there were no rationalization, it would be necessary to keep in mind that here as elsewhere the impulses that lead to conduct are complex and subtle and seldom reveal a single line of causation.

First, contraception may be entered upon as a temporary program. Katharine Davis, in her investigation, found 65 women who reported that their reason for the use of contraceptives was based on the desire to have time for adjustment in the early period of marriage before entering motherhood.<sup>47</sup> Commonly this program is adopted because of the desire to accomplish marital adjustment without the complications associated with pregnancy. Need is felt of concentrating upon the husband-wife relationship without the necessity of preparing for the coming of the child and without the physical handicaps that might attend conception. A second reason is the unwillingness to assume the economic burden at the beginning of marriage that would

<sup>46</sup> James F. Cooper, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

<sup>47</sup> Katharine B. Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

come with pregnancy and the responsibilities of parenthood. Whenever a study is made of the contraceptive practices of those who have not been married more than a year, it is found that this temporary purpose of contraception is more common than replies from a miscellaneous group of women indicate.

There are obviously two dangers connected with this contraceptive program. In some cases parenthood is not sought until after the woman has passed out of her period of fertility. In fewer cases this may be true likewise of the man. There is also risk that desire for luxury, social ambition, or a mere drifting policy regarding parenthood will be continued until the temporary plan of avoiding parenthood becomes permanent.

A second important motive for a contraceptive program has to do with physical or mental health. These reasons are innumerable in the form they take, ranging from the absolute necessity of avoiding parenthood because of risk of death, to the conviction that for hereditary reasons parenthood is not desirable. The expression of these reasons for attempting to avoid parenthood reveals the most tragic of human situations.

Another motive commonly given for the contraceptive program is the desire for the spacing of children. In this decision the health of the mother is usually the chief concern, but this need not be the exclusive motive. The decision is also influenced by the belief that spacing is required if the responsibilities of parenthood are to be adequately met and sometimes the spacing is adopted for strictly economic reasons. It is obvious that too frequent pregnancies may not only be detrimental to the mother's health, but even at times a serious risk. It is also clear that the question of what constitutes too great frequency of pregnancies is an individual matter requiring a concrete answer by a competent medical authority. It is, however, felt by many medical specialists that a woman should not conceive oftener than once in three years if the best conditions for health are to be maintained, but even this when accepted is regarded only as an average program.

We have some interesting data regarding infant mortality in relation to frequency of birth. Valuable as these statistics are, they cannot be interpreted as a precise statement of the effects of spacing on child mortality, since other factors are involved which may even be more significant than spacing itself.



For all except first infants the length of time that has elapsed since the next preceding birth may influence the chances of life. In the present study this interval was measured in approximate terms only—by the difference in even years between the mother's age at the time of birth of the scheduled child and her age at the time of the preceding birth.

The analysis given in Table 44 shows that the infants who were born after the shortest intervals—i.e., after changes of only one year in their mothers' ages—since next preceding births to their mothers had the highest mortality rate (146.7) and those who were born after changes of four or more years had the lowest (84.9). The most marked difference appeared between the rates for infants who were born after changes of one year and after changes of two years, which were 146.7 and 98.6, respectively. Practically no difference was found between the mortality of infants born after changes of three and of four or more years, the rates for these groups being 86.5 and 84.9, respectively.<sup>48</sup>

If it were possible to untangle the many elements involved so as to have exact knowledge of the part played by the frequency of pregnancy, it is reasonable to suppose that we would find frequent childbirth both a contributing cause and a mere coincidence in its relation to excess mortality, but in what proportion we can now only conjecture. Apart from the vitality risk to mother and child at parturition is the question of the long-time effect on the child's health if the nine months of his life in utero and his nine months as a nursling come at a time when his mother is unable properly to nourish him.

Four, another reason given for the contraceptive program is the desire to maintain the companionate type of marriage. There are various motives for this. Dislike of children, unwillingness to go through childbirth, fear of the responsibilities of child care, belief that the other partner is unfitted morally to be a parent, determination not to sacrifice pleasure-getting, luxury, or ambitions, and doubt as to whether the marriage will persist are the most common grounds for the choice of the companionate status.

Fifth, another motive for the use of contraceptives is not at present much emphasized, although as Himes has pointed out, it was present in the minds of America's two birth control pioneers.<sup>49</sup> This is the

<sup>48</sup> *Causal Factors in Infant Mortality*, pp. 60-61. (U. S. Department of Labor, Children's Bureau, Publication No. 142.)

<sup>49</sup> Norman E. Himes, "Eugenic Thought in the American Birth Control Movement One Hundred Years Ago," *Eugenics*, Vol. II, No. 5.

eugenic motive, and although at present it is less stressed than the others, it may be in the not far distant future a much-emphasized objective in the contraceptive program.

Sixth, the economic motive for the practice of contraception is possibly at present the most common of all. This ranges from the necessity felt by those in abject poverty not to increase their family, to the desires of those who do not intend to lessen their economic security or their pleasures and luxuries by adding to their family.

**Need of research.** The use of contraceptives has already become so characteristic a part of American culture that no individual conscious of prevailing practices can avoid making his or her personal decision as to contraceptive policy upon entering marriage. The arguments for and against it are many and forcefully expressed. Unquestionably, no human invention is more consequential for personal and social happiness. That contraception has come to stay seems certain. In the light of other discoveries and inventions it is reasonable to suppose that its efficiency as a result of observation and experiment will increase. What we now need is not dogmatic assertion but investigation in the spirit of science, that we may know the answers to many questions which the coming of contraception has brought us.

Agitation, legislation, and preachment cannot permanently determine the status of contraception. In the end the argument must be settled by facts gathered through scientific investigation which no unprejudiced person can challenge. Such information in the nature of the case is difficult to obtain. Fortunately a start has been made and with so many birth control clinics functioning in this country and throughout the world, and such organizations as the National Committee on Maternal Health in this country, knowledge of the significance of contraception as a form of birth control in all its aspects, physical, psychic, and social, should rapidly increase. If the effects of this invention are to be similar to those of past inventions which have made fundamental social changes, contraception is likely not to be an unmixed good as its advocates assert or altogether an evil as its opponents insist.

The following statements gathered from two different classes of seniors reveal the prevailing knowledge of birth control in the college group.

The time when knowledge was first gained regarding birth control methods, as reported by College Seniors. Class of 46 students.

High School, 1st year .....	2
High School .....	24
Preparatory School .....	4
College, at entrance .....	5
College .....	5
Grammar School .....	3
Age of 15 years .....	1
Don't remember .....	2

Self-acquired knowledge of college men in regard to birth control methods. 125 reporting. Classification based on detailed written statements.

Accurate knowledge of clinic and popular methods .....	28
Hazy knowledge of clinic, but accurate knowledge of popular methods .....	17
Accurate knowledge of popular methods .....	50
Hazy knowledge of popular methods .....	16
Hazy idea of Birth Control .....	12
No knowledge .....	2

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## CHAPTER XXIII

### PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF PREGNANCY AND CHILDBIRTH

**Signs of pregnancy.** It is important that the pregnant woman should know her condition as soon as possible. Naturally she wishes this information for personal reasons, but from a family viewpoint it is desirable that the pregnancy be recognized as early as it can be, so that the household program may be adjusted to her needs. It is also of the greatest advantage for her to come under competent medical supervision at the first intimation that conception has taken place.

So much depends upon this early recognition of pregnancy, it is fortunate that ordinarily there need be no doubt concerning the wife's situation. As a rule she is convinced of her condition and it is this that leads her to consult a doctor. The evidences at this early stage are probable rather than positive, and occasionally the woman finds herself deceived. In a few cases even the physician cannot be certain of her condition until the pregnancy has reached the fifth or sixth month, when it is possible for him to detect the outline of the baby's body, to hear its heart beat, and by means of the X-ray to see its bones.

There are four symptoms of pregnancy upon which the doctor relies in forming his opinion. The first is the cessation of menstruation. A woman's passing of one menstrual period suggests that she is pregnant. Her passing two in succession very nearly confirms it. These events naturally have more significance for the woman who has previously been regular in her periods. The stopping of menstruation would end all doubt were it not that in some instances disease, lack of physical vitality, emotional stress, or some other pathological cause may be the real explanation. Rarely the unmarried woman who has no possibility of being pregnant also has this cessation of menstruation. In some cases women going from one climate to another to live have been freed from menstruation for several months or even for more than a year.

Sometimes a woman may be pregnant and have one or two periods before her menstrual flow ceases. She may also have an unrecognized

miscarriage which she supposes is her usual menstruation, not knowing that she has been pregnant. A woman who is not having menstrual periods because she is nursing a child may conceive, although in former times under more primitive conditions of life it appears that a nursing woman very seldom if ever became pregnant.

Another evidence of pregnancy is the changing of the breasts of the woman. About the end of the first month changes take place which draw the attention of the woman. Her breasts seem larger or fuller even though to the eye there may be no sign of this. By another month the breasts have changed in size, the nipples begin to grow larger and darker in color. Perhaps as early as the third month a thin watery fluid called colostrum comes from the nipples, although generally it does not appear until later than this. It is not true milk but it bears witness to the changes that are taking place in preparation for the nursing of the child.

The third symptom, which fortunately is not necessarily connected with pregnancy, is what is known as morning sickness. This is a stomach disturbance, including nausea and often vomiting, and frequently loss of appetite, which begins to show itself about the third or fourth week of pregnancy. A considerable proportion of women, probably about one-third, escape these unpleasant symptoms of pregnancy altogether. There is great variation among women who do have morning sickness as to the length of time the disturbance lasts and the amount of discomfort they have. It is often in the power of the competent physician to shorten and to lessen a woman's suffering. Obviously this stomach disturbance by itself would not be thought of as a sign of pregnancy, since it may be the result of stomach or general body condition, associated with some form of illness. When the other symptoms are present, however, it is a significant fact in diagnosis.

Another symptom of pregnancy is an increased irritability of the bladder which is not caused by kidney disease but by the uterus in the later period of pregnancy pressing upon the bladder, creating the desire to empty it oftener than usual because it seems full, even though it may actually contain little. There is the possibility of kidney trouble showing itself at this time, or of a mild case becoming more serious. For this reason a competent doctor will periodically analyze the urine throughout the woman's pregnancy, that he may be sure of her condition. Sometimes toward the latter part of preg-

nancy there may be trouble in controlling the bladder, a difficulty which should be reported to the physician and which ordinarily he can easily rectify.

As the pregnancy continues, changes in the uterus grow clearer to the doctor. Changes in the breasts become more marked and sometimes require the attention of a physician. Although morning sickness ordinarily passes by the end of the third month, there may be disturbances such as a tendency toward constipation due to pressure of the uterus. Such forms of indigestion as sour stomach or gas may occur, and in some cases toward the end of the period a remarkable hunger springs up, often associated with a craving for a particular item of diet. Local superstitions that narrow the diet of a pregnant woman should be gone over with the physician, as they are generally to be ignored, and in their place it is an advantage to have an up-to-date understanding of the balance of foodstuffs and accessories necessary for the optimum development of the fœtus. The woman gains in body weight, especially in the late part of pregnancy, and during the fourth month commonly her abdomen begins to enlarge, although regarding this there is considerable variation. Seldom is there a noticeable increase in size until the end of the sixth month, in a first pregnancy, and there are women who throughout pregnancy change so little in their general proportions as to attract no attention.

The first time the woman becomes conscious of the active movements of her embryonic baby is known as *quickenings*. The eighteenth week is the average time for this but it often comes a week or two earlier or a week or two later. It is most easily recognized when the woman is lying on her back. As the womb increases in size pressure on other organs of the body may lead to enlarged or varicose veins, hemorrhoids, swelling of the feet and ankles, tingling feeling in the legs, or even neuralgic pain and shortness of breath. If any of these disturbances occur they will be given treatment by the doctor, and ordinarily they are more or less uncomfortable rather than matters of any seriousness. They should not, however, be concealed from the doctor, for it is his business rather than that of the patient to decide their significance.

**Importance of pregnancy for the family.** It is evident from this brief description of the common symptoms of pregnancy that its coming concerns both husband and wife and needs to be looked at from the family viewpoint. Often it brings, at least for a time, con-



siderable discomfort and even genuine suffering to the wife. It is most unjust to treat this as if it were exclusively her problem, needing neither the understanding nor the sympathy of the husband. This is so obvious and it is such a natural impulse in a man who is kindly and human to give his wife every possible assistance, that it may seem not to need mention. The fact is, however severe an indictment it may be of human nature, that there are men who take no interest whatsoever in the wife's ordeal and give her neither counsel nor co-operation as she moves onward to childbirth. It is not strange that under such circumstances the wife loses all love and even respect for her husband and dreads possible conception to such an extent that she builds up intense hatred of sex and everything pertaining to it.

From a purely selfish point of view it pays the husband to take an active interest in his wife's condition from the moment conception is suspected until the end of the nursing period. His help and his sympathy will lessen the dangers of the experiences through which the woman goes, will make her more willing to accept motherhood, and will contribute to her health and to that of her child. From the viewpoint of future domestic felicity it is important that the wife know that her husband feels his responsibilities and is eager to show in practice the love which he declared during courtship.

This does not mean that the husband's sympathy should take an exaggerated form nor that it should run counter to the desires of the woman. It need not be at all emotional, and there are women who much prefer to go quietly on during pregnancy as nearly as possible according to the previous régime. Such women are irritated by the ostentatious solicitude of the husband. His attention should be intelligent, his coöperation practical, and his sympathy quiet. There are husbands who during their wife's pregnancy over-worry, and the temptation toward this in the highly sensitive and imaginative man is great. Such a husband's concern may upset his wife until even the doctor may lose patience and insist upon greater self-control in the husband.

The sensible man will notice or learn what his wife needs to make her pregnancy as pleasant as possible, and he will with tact and judgment encourage her in all the things she needs to do, and will also give her, as far as he is able, a home environment of security and emotional satisfaction. He will help her to find recreation, assist her when necessary in her housekeeping or parental responsibilities, and

will guard against his own reaction to her nervous or emotional instability. This last problem will be treated at some length in the next chapter when we consider the psychic aspects of pregnancy.

The conditions that prevail during the wife's pregnancy have a larger significance for the family than their possible effect upon domestic adjustment. The health of the woman after childbirth and the health of the child will be largely determined by the kind of prenatal care the wife receives. The woman who delivers a weak or sickly child, or the woman who, after giving birth to a child, becomes a semi-invalid or falls into a chronic mental or physical ill health, brings even to the family of wealth a great burden and to those less fortunate in their economic status a load which the husband may find well-nigh crushing.

The husband's part is small compared with that of the physician, but the former may influence even more than the latter the woman's emotional reaction to the experience, and this in large measure will determine her attitude toward future pregnancies.

**Choosing the physician.** When the wife faces her first pregnancy the choice of physician is no small matter but one that deserves a conference of husband and wife. The decision should not be made as a mere routine, for it cannot be safely assumed that the physician who has been called in to treat illness in the family is the proper person to undertake this particular responsibility. It surely is not a decision that should be made on the basis of friendship. The wealthy seldom have any problem since they find a specialist and let him take charge of things. Usually this appears to a young couple struggling along on a small income during the first years of marriage impossible.

Many couples, however, exaggerate the cost of having an obstetrician, not realizing that a flat charge is made for each case, with little regard for the amount of time it takes, and that it is not economy to wait until the general practitioner finds a case too difficult for him before calling in a specialist. Having an obstetrician take entire charge of the case from the first intimation of pregnancy until the mother is herself again after parturition costs no more than bringing in the specialist on a hurry call after unforeseen difficulties have appeared during labor. Not only the mother's permanent health but the normality of the child may suffer from the blundering of an unskilled general practitioner in charge of a pregnancy. Any family that has tried to tinker with its own car and patch up its own plumbing knows

the difference a comparatively small outlay of money can make in getting results.

Before any effort is made to find a physician it is well to think over the qualifications desired. The ideal man will have had considerable experience, but he will not be an old man who is set in his ways and does not keep up. He will have had special training in an A grade medical school and in a hospital of high standing. The physician will be a man or a woman who keeps a systematic check on the patient throughout the period of pregnancy, who is not too busy to give personal attention to detail, and who does not dismiss the case until the woman is fully recovered from the ordeal and known by examination to be in normal condition.

The ideal choice would also have a personality which the woman would find winsome. Undoubtedly there is a tendency for women to establish special rapport that in some instances is nothing less than a fixation on the physician. To have a physician that repels rather than attracts would be most unfortunate and might adversely color the entire experience of pregnancy and childbirth for the wife. In no form of medical practice is the relationship of physician and patient a matter which from the therapeutic point of view deserves more consideration, so significant is its rôle in prenatal care and child delivery.

If an obstetrician is procurable, it is good judgment to turn to him even though it may seem slightly more expensive. Before a commitment is made, if there is need of taking up the question of cost, there should be no hesitation in explaining the family's economic situation frankly and knowing just what the obstetrician's fee and terms of payment are to be. It is not necessary, and perhaps it is unfair, to attempt to get the services of an obstetrical specialist whose practice is largely taking care of difficult cases. If there should prove to be need of such highly specialized service, the obstetrician handling the case should be expected to seek it the moment it becomes necessary. There are some intelligent people who have been led into the belief that the obstetrician ordinarily handles only the very difficult cases and that his charges are correspondingly high. They are confusing the usual practice of the obstetrician with the specialist who acts as a consultant in cases of special difficulty or who takes over from the start women who present unusual and abnormal problems.

Those who live in villages or country places at a distance from a

city may find in their vicinity no obstetrician. There are some who solve this problem by having the wife go periodically to the nearest city for examination, and a week or two before delivery is expected, having her near the hospital, so that she may have the expert service desired. This solution is, however, expensive and often on account of family conditions impossible to carry out. There is also always the risk that the birth of the child will come sooner than was expected and then some physician unacquainted with the case must immediately be called. The most feasible decision for the average rural or village family is to choose the physician who has the largest practice in the neighborhood along the line of obstetrics and whose reputation is highest. He is not a specialist in the sense that he exclusively practices one branch of medicine, but he does take a special interest in obstetrics, and his services are likely to be more satisfactory than those of a colleague who takes little interest in this particular branch of medicine. If there be no such doctor in the community or vicinity, choice must fall upon the physician who comes nearest to having the qualifications desired.

There should be no hesitation in transferring the case if it becomes clear that the physician is not giving the care that should reasonably be expected or if for any reason the wife develops a hostility to him. In the latter event the husband can explain the situation, and rarely will an experienced obstetrician have any emotional reaction, for he is familiar with the psychic problems that often accompany pregnancy. I say this with confidence, having counseled such a transfer in cases where it seemed highly desirable for psychological reasons, and I can testify that the obstetrician surrendered the case willingly and without any emotion as a mere commonplace in a form of medical practice where strong emotional and often unexplainable reactions on the part of the patient are taken for granted. When such a transfer is made, information already gathered during the early stages of the case should of course be available for the physician who takes over the responsibility of caring for the wife.

**The rôle of the physician.** In no part of medicine is there such need of emphasis upon prevention as in prenatal care. The doctor is still likely to think of his profession as one primarily concerned with the effort to cure those who are sick. This is not strange because his training has largely emphasized the curative side of medicine, and the layman for the most part refuses to think of him in any other way.



In obstetrics more than elsewhere this idea of prevention rather than cure is emphasized.

The doctor who takes over the case is chosen not so much because of his skill in handling pathological conditions that may arise during the pregnancy, he is selected primarily to prevent any such happening and, assuming there is no previous chronic heart or kidney trouble or other dangerous condition, if he is competent and painstaking no serious difficulty, barring accident, will occur. If he is to have the responsibility of this prenatal program he must have the confidence of the wife and the coöperation of the entire family in carrying out his program. The doctor is not just taking care of the wife's body, he is attempting to regulate all the circumstances of her life and influence her condition during pregnancy, her experience at childbirth, and the physical welfare of the child. The wise doctor will show no disposition to disrupt family routine but will seek as far as is wise to have things continue according to the usual order. He will not hesitate, however, to suggest any change that seems really important and he will always think of his patient in her family background.

Upon her first visit to the physician the wife will be asked questions by the physician who desires to become familiar with her family situation. In part his conversation will also seek to establish confidence on her part, if it happens that this is the first time she has been his patient. At this first visit the doctor will consider the probability that she is pregnant and will give her such advice as seems to him pertinent. He will want to get as thoroughly acquainted with her as possible in the effort to know her personal characteristics, her attitude toward childbirth, her emotional conditioning as it may influence her experience, and her family setting. He may not seek all this information at once nor will he attempt an inquisition or endeavor to pry out anything concerning which she shows reticence unless it be extremely important. His interest is friendly and co-operative, and it is for the advantage of the wife to be perfectly frank.

Sometimes an interview is held with the husband also, and when the wife requires special help or a measure of guardianship this is much to be desired. In any case the doctor and the husband should know each other and the husband should be ready to assume any responsibility that may fall upon him. Frequently toward the end of pregnancy it is the husband that reports to the doctor changes in the wife's condition which suggest that she is about to deliver the

child, and it is he who sees that the wife gets to the hospital, or if it be a home delivery he communicates the situation to the physician.

**Physical examination.** As soon as the doctor is convinced that the wife is pregnant he will desire to make a thorough examination. Before proceeding to this he will record under the personal history of the patient a considerable quantity of data which will furnish the physical background of the case. He will be particularly interested in knowing whether or not there has been tuberculosis in her family and whether she has been threatened by it. Indeed, it is not too much to say that in the majority of cases an X-ray of the lungs should be taken so the doctor may know the degree of infection that the patient has had previous to pregnancy and how great is her risk of a new invasion. He will also be interested in the childhood diseases she has had, particularly scarlet fever, tonsillitis, rheumatism, and diphtheria, because of the influence these may have had in leading to complications of heart or kidneys. He will also record in detail the facts regarding the patient's menstrual history, including the amount of flow, the regularity and frequency of the periods, and especially whether they have been painful. If there has been a previous pregnancy, the doctor will have a long list of questions regarding the previous experience, unless he is himself familiar with it.

The physical examination itself at the hands of a competent physician will be thorough, giving him an exact knowledge of the patient's condition, body structure, and pelvic measurements. These have to be taken some time during the pregnancy, and may well be done at the start. A sample of blood should be taken for a Wassermann reaction as a test of syphilis. This should not be resented with the idea that it suggests suspicion of the morals of husband or wife; it is merely a part of proper medical technique, for if syphilis is present and unsuspected by both husband and wife it should be recognized immediately and not left to be discovered at a later time by its costly consequences. A routine urinalysis will also be made, and this will be repeated periodically throughout the pregnancy, to enable the doctor to make sure that no kidney or bladder disease is developing.

Since a vaginal examination is desirable, the careful physician will wish this to be made early in the pregnancy, perhaps at the first visit. The doctor will want to know the position of the uterus, whether or not there is any pelvic tumor, and he is negligent if he does not make a smear for a microscopic test for gonorrhea. This, like syphilis,

might exist without the knowledge of the patient, and it is highly important that it be known at the start and treated. Better still, of course, is an examination for both gonorrhea and syphilis before pregnancy begins, that they may be cured before complicating conditions arise.

Having collected personal data and finished examination, the physician will give the patient instructions which she can carry home and study there.

At the first visit of the wife the question is likely to be asked, When can the delivery be expected? The usual length of pregnancy is about 280 days. A simple way of finding the probable date of delivery is counting back three months from the last monthly period and adding seven days. This must not be thought of as exact because not only is there a variation among women in the length of this period, so that the baby comes sometimes a few days earlier or a few days later, but frequently a mistake is made regarding the time of conception so that the birth occurs considerably earlier or later than was expected. There should never be anxiety because of any apparent delay in the coming of the child, for the doctor will not be concerned about that, but there should be preparation for the coming of labor earlier than was estimated. This need not be made a matter of worry but plans should be made for getting the wife to the hospital or the nurse and doctor to the house at the first suggestion of the approaching birth.

**An adequate program.** The physician will insist upon periodic visits from the wife, and although these need not take much time, they must not be merely perfunctory. If the physician neglects to check the condition of the patient, especially to make a urinalysis and a test of the blood pressure, he is showing himself incompetent in his prenatal responsibilities and should not be trusted with the delivery. A busy general practitioner is tempted to take too much for granted, but neither husband nor wife should tolerate neglect. Pregnancy is not a thing just to be left to nature; it requires the careful supervision of a man of science. Even if there have been previous pregnancies that have gone smoothly, this is no excuse for failure to keep constant check on the wife's condition.

It is the belief of those interested in lessening maternal mortality in America that men and women must be educated to a realization of the meaning of adequate prenatal care and taught to insist upon competent medical service. A sensible program does not bring fear by ex-

aggeration of the dangers of pregnancy. No doctor of judgment will stress the risks of pregnancy or do anything to encourage dread in the woman. The policy of the husband must likewise be the avoidance of any suggestion that will make the wife over-concerned with herself or encourage morbid imagination, but this should not be carried so far as to make her timid about reporting troublesome or persistent symptoms or worries, which may either be cleared up by frank discussion with the obstetrician or may indicate the need of additional rest or other change in routine, or, rarely, may lead to the discovery of a pathological condition. The wife also will have a duty to herself, and as we shall see in the next chapter, she must be prepared to protect herself from the foolish suggestions of friends and relatives. A prenatal program is built not on the idea that pregnancy is dangerous but on the conviction that if prenatal care is adequate the risks of childbearing are reduced to a minimum and usually handled with safety.

**Family coöperation in pregnancy program.** The family routine will be disturbed as little as possible throughout the period of pregnancy, but the atmosphere of the home needs to be as favorable as it can be made to the wife's contentment. The husband will desire to show special consideration and as far as it is in his power to protect the wife from over-fatigue or any disturbing event. Housekeeping duties should be lightened if they are too strenuous, although most doctors do not look kindly upon the woman's giving up her usual work, realizing that too much leisure and a lessening of exercise may not be good for her.

If there are children they should be told of the pregnancy and, if old enough to enter into the family coöperation, given their share of responsibility. This is especially important in the case of young children as a means of avoiding the jealousy which is frequently felt by them, particularly by an only child.

In the shaping of the family program the needs and the reactions of the wife must be compelling. Outside the realm of hygiene where the doctor's orders will be followed, it is impossible to lay down rules. For example, it would seem wise during the wife's pregnancy to keep relatives and friends from coming for extended visits. This is so commonly true that it could be made an axiom were it not that by a minority of women the companionship of the mother is desired and proves helpful in lessening strain and fear. This adaptation to the



needs of the wife must be continuous throughout the period of pregnancy. It is not uncommon for her desires to change during the progress of pregnancy so as to lead to a complete reversal of her earlier inclinations. The husband's attention and sympathy needs to be unobtrusive for unless the wife is seriously ill at some time during the period she should not be treated as an invalid nor made to think that she is one.

**The wife's personal regimen.** 1. *Exercise and rest.* It is important that the wife should have plenty of exercise and if possible that this should be out of doors. Her muscular condition will influence her experience in labor, but she cannot attempt to correct the mistakes of a previous sedentary life by greatly increasing her exercise during the period of pregnancy. The amount of exercise that she takes will be decided by the doctor, and his judgment will be based in part upon her previous habits and in part upon her proneness to fatigue.

The wife will be advised against violent exercise and physical strain such as comes from lifting heavy furniture, and if possible she will be relieved from extra hard work of any kind. To accomplish this it may be necessary at times for the husband to turn to and help her. All unnecessary household tasks should be eliminated, that the woman may have more time for out of doors and for rest. This being out in the open air and sunshine is highly desirable but in some conservative, relatively isolated communities public opinion discourages it.

Like any other silly custom this branding of childbearing women as "un-see-ables" will vanish as soon as enough sensible people make light of it. Open air, activity and sunshine contribute to the general health of the mother which at this time should have especial consideration, but they do more than this because they also furnish favorable conditions for the developing embryo. For example, the sunshine helps the fœtus to make use of the calcium in the mother's food for the building of its bones and teeth.

The wife will be advised to abstain from strenuous sports even though in the past she has been accustomed to them. Tennis, for example, is likely to be prohibited while golf may be encouraged. Long automobile trips or motoring over rough roads will be discouraged.

2. *Sleep and rest.* The pregnant woman requires abundant sleep, at least eight hours, and frequent rest periods during the day if she feels at all tired. Many add a short nap during the day. If this does

not discourage sleep it proves an advantage. Rest must not be interpreted in a purely negative way. There is also need of rest from one's ordinary occupation by recreation in accord with the woman's preferences.

3. *Clothing.* The wife's clothing should be loose enough not to interfere with breathing or circulation. It should not be heavy and should hang from the shoulders. There can be no rule as to the amount of clothing she should wear, since that is influenced by personal idiosyncrasies, locality, and season, but there must be no danger of her becoming chilled. It is not necessary for the wife to dress in such a way as to exaggerate the changes of body that accompany pregnancy, for dresses are now procurable that give the freedom desired while at the same time largely concealing variation in form. Even the rural mother may have these sent on approval from city department stores, if they are not to be had in her own community. Some women keep their contours more nearly those of the average woman by wearing a properly fitted supporting belt or corset, of the type approved by the physician. By distributing the extra weight of the body so that it is borne by the larger muscles of the back, such a garment may relieve the woman who wears it of much of the fatigue that might otherwise prevent her getting enough exercise. At least for the eighth and ninth months of pregnancy and in the two months of involution following parturition, the question of a medically approved support should be considered if a woman has any desire to approach again to the figure of her pre-maternal days. No support should be worn without first submitting it to the physician, since a badly designed or ill-fitting garment only aggravates the condition it is supposed to relieve.

Attention must be given to the shoes that the wife wears while she is pregnant. Some women find that their feet have a tendency to swell. It proves an advantage to them to change their shoes during the day, perhaps wearing larger ones toward night than in the morning. In any case care must be taken that the shoes worn are broad, comfortable and free from high heels. A fall may prove serious for a pregnant woman. To avoid the risk of tripping, the heels should be broad and low. High heels tend to throw the body out of position, thus bringing unnecessary strain on the muscles of the woman who is carrying a child. Round garters, tight enough to be of value, slow down the venous circulation and increase the tendency toward vari-

cosities. During the last weeks before the advent of the baby, the woman should avoid intercourse, douches and tub baths lest she develop septic poisoning. There is also the possibility of danger in getting in and out of the tub.

4. *Diet.* It is obvious that the diet of the pregnant woman is a most important matter. Upon the nourishment extracted from her diet and transmitted to the foetus through the placenta of the woman the embryonic child depends for life and growth. The food that keeps the adult in health may not meet the needs of the woman during gestation, since her food has a double purpose. It provides for her health and strength and at the same time furnishes nourishment for the developing life which, although independent in her uterus, is indirectly dependent for the means of life and growth.

The diet is so important a matter that it will receive the attention of the physician, who will prescribe according to the particular needs of the individual woman. In general it may be said that she must have well-balanced rations, including protein, fat, carbohydrates, a liberal amount of water, and more mineral and vitamin material than usual. Vitamin and mineral substances can best be had from milk, fruit and vegetables, especially such as lettuce, spinach, celery, carrots, oranges, apricots, and the like. The amount of meat to be eaten is generally limited. The American physician will frown upon alcohol in any form and will restrict the drinking of tea and coffee.

Although during pregnancy the woman should eat carefully, it is not necessary as was once supposed that she eat in great quantity. The modern doctor will discourage her eating to produce fat for herself or for her baby. No attention should be paid to the diet gossip of friends and neighbors who insist that a particular food is dangerous or beneficial with no iota of reason for their statement. No book can wisely prescribe in detail the diet necessary for a pregnant woman since there is such need of adaptation to the particular case. Morning sickness, for example, may be magnified or lessened by appropriate diet. A tendency toward kidney trouble, the appearance of sugar in the urine, or any other individual condition must be taken into account in the choice of diet.

From some source the baby must obtain the calcium necessary for the building of his bones and teeth. This can be most readily obtained from milk, although leafy vegetables and whole grains yield lesser amounts. Unless at least a pint of milk is taken daily the child

is likely to draw calcium from the mother's bones and teeth. A quart of milk daily will care for the needs of both the mother and child. Occasionally the physician prescribes calcium in some other form to meet the particular needs of his patient.

Elimination of waste material in the body during pregnancy puts upon the bowels, the kidneys, the lungs, and the skin extra work, and good hygiene should be followed to give each one of these organs favorable opportunity to carry on its functions. The enlarging of the uterus and its pressing upon the intestines naturally encourage constipation. This can best be offset by a suitable diet, the drinking of sufficient liquid, and a habit routine. Drugs are not to be used except on the doctor's orders.

5. *Care of the teeth.* It used to be quite common for the mother to have her teeth decay rapidly during pregnancy. The child robbed her of calcium because there was not enough in her diet. Even under favorable conditions of diet the woman needs to pay special attention to dentistry, so that if any decay starts it may be defeated at once. Great care should be given to the brushing of the teeth and in case of excessive acidity of the mouth an alkaline wash should be used. Advice regarding this should be obtained from the dentist. The woman should realize also that her living conditions, her habits, especially her diet, determine the character of the baby's teeth, that his first teeth begin to form as early as the third month of pregnancy, and that all twenty of the first set are in the jaw at birth.

This brief summary of a proper regimen is given merely as an illustration of the various problems that require concrete instruction from the physician. The author does not believe that any book of general instruction can be made a safe guide for the woman in pregnancy. On the other hand, it is important for husband and wife to realize in some detail the meaning of a proper prenatal program so that they may at least have a basis for judging whether the physician to whom the case has been entrusted is competent and painstaking. It is helpful also for both husband and wife to have a general notion of the significance of such matters as diet, exercise, and rest.

**Danger signs.** Pregnancy is, of course, a normal physiological condition, but it is one that may quickly give way to something pathological requiring the immediate attention of the physician. If anything untoward happens, it is of the greatest importance that this be reported at once to the physician in charge of the case, for even



if it proves insignificant, the doctor will be grateful for having been informed, and if it is serious the danger is greatly increased by delay in treatment. Any bleeding from the vagina, though slight, should be reported at once. The same is true of pains in the lower abdomen or lower back. Other danger signals are serious or persistent vomiting, dizziness, swelling of the face, hands, and legs, blurring of the vision, spots before the eyes, pain in the pit of the stomach, or persistent headache. A safe rule is to report to the doctor anything which seems unusual or is causing worry.

In case of a discharge of blood from the vagina the woman should go immediately to bed and summon the physician. She should keep as quiet as possible and never attempt an examination of herself because of the risk of infection.

**The lying-in period.** After the child has been born it takes time for the woman to return to her condition before pregnancy. The uterus, which has grown with the increased size of the child, must now go back to its former size. Muscles that have been stretched must gradually go back to their normal condition. While these changes are taking place it is necessary for the woman to remain quiet and, however well she may feel, to keep from attempting her ordinary activities.

Physicians differ in their policy in regard to the length of this lying-in period. Women also differ in the length of time they need for the involution after childbirth. It is quite customary for the woman to be allowed to sit up on the tenth day after the coming of the child. Some physicians require at least three weeks at the hospital or in the lying-in room at home, while others permit the patient to take up her ordinary routine sooner than this.

The woman who has had an easy childbirth and who is feeling well naturally grows eager to return to her home or to take up again her household duties. She underestimates the new responsibilities that will come when she begins to care for the child herself, and the ease with which she will then get tired. Often also she does not realize how much more quickly she will obtain her characteristic vigor if she does not attempt to cut to the minimum the lying-in period. As a matter of fact the modern woman finds it hard to be content during this time and is apt to grow restless as soon as she begins to feel well. As a consequence it is a common confession of mothers that they gave up the convalescent rôle too soon and were a long time getting back

their strength because of their hurry to pick up the threads of their usual routine, complicated by the responsibility of caring for the new baby.

The attitude of the husband often influences the woman. He should do his utmost to keep her from being uneasy on account of her absence from the household, and once she starts caring for the baby he should give her assistance, particularly in the care of the baby at night and in the early morning. Numbers of women declare that the hardest part of having a baby is their loss of sleep on account of the baby's 10 P.M., 2 A.M., and 6 A.M. feedings. Husbands who try it soon become adept at preparing the baby for his meal and getting him snugly back to his crib so that the mother need only half-wake for the few minutes needed to suckle the infant, and run no risk of falling asleep and letting the baby either go without his food or eat, off and on, for an hour or two. The husband's help at this point during the two months following the birth of the baby not only makes a deep impression on the wife, it is also a strategic way for him to learn to reconcile his awe of his child with his desire to lay the foundation for a lifelong father-child comradeship at the time when this can most easily be done.

**Prenatal care required in every pregnancy.** The first pregnancy naturally attracts most attention because it is a novel experience that carries with it an uncertainty seldom felt in later pregnancies. This does not mean, however, that the woman should exercise great care only throughout her first pregnancy or that the first childbirth will necessarily be harder or more hazardous than a later one. However fortunate the mother of several children has been, she cannot afford to relax her prenatal program once conception again occurs.

**Postnatal care.** A six weeks' and a three months' visit postnatally should be made and a pelvic examination made at this time in order to be sure that the uterus has properly involuted, that the cervix is in normal condition, and that the perineum is healed and strong. A visit at six months should be made to be sure that there is no cervical erosion if there is any discharge, for cervical erosions in themselves are not dangerous if treated, but if allowed to continue will cause considerable discomfort and soreness which could be cured in a few treatments.

**Sociological implications.** The briefest summary of the conditions necessary for proper prenatal hygiene reveals how far society is

at present from the achievement rightly expected of a democratic state. There are pregnant women who do not have proper diet, reasonable work, freedom from worry, or adequate care from a physician either because of their poverty or on account of ignorance for which public school instruction is responsible. In a wholesome, socially-minded community no pregnant woman will be permitted to sacrifice her own child's health or life because of inadequate income, too hard or too long hours of work in factory, office, store or home, or because of inability to pay the necessary medical fee for competent attention. Doctors, nurses, and hospitals cannot rightly be indicted for problems beyond their power to solve. The fault is fundamentally one of social attitude and inability to recognize responsibilities that belong to society.

The contribution of the mother in childbirth is still generally undervalued and as a consequence pregnancy means for many an American woman an ordeal that it would not be in a society maintaining an adequate prenatal program. Efficient democracy will announce itself first to the woman by guaranteeing that every individual entering pregnancy will be offered without respect to race, class or economic status the full resources of modern science.

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## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE PSYCHIC AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF PREGNANCY AND CHILDBIRTH

**The psychic aspects of pregnancy.** For clearness of thinking we generalize certain experiences as mind and other human experiences as body, but we know from innumerable examples that these two sorts of things are not so separated that one does not influence the other. Indeed, modern science is finding the interdependence of man's physical and mental life intricate beyond anything once imagined. Any considerable change in the working of the body is reported in the psychic life. The emotions especially disclose new physical conditions within the body. We now know that this is not a vague sort of parallelism but a substantial causal relationship by which changes in the structure or behavior of the body operate directly upon the emotions. It is inevitable that so important a change in the body as that represented by pregnancy should have a decided effect upon the emotional life. Conversely very strong emotional reaction, especially if it brings fear or anger, may so influence the body condition as to endanger the body processes associated with pregnancy, leading in some instances, as we shall later see, to abortions, miscarriages, or premature births.

Because of this intimate relationship between the woman's body and her mental reaction, there is a psychic aspect of pregnancy that needs discussion. Problems arise because of mental or nervous reactions brought about by pregnancy. They should be considered the products of causes just as truly as morning sickness or constipation that results from the woman's condition.

Women vary greatly in their mental reactions to pregnancy. This is partly due to the differences of body structure and types of personality and in part the consequence of unlike conditioning through the preceding years. In some women the most noticeable result of pregnancy is along the mental side. Sometimes it is a marked irritability which is not at all characteristic of the person. Sometimes it is deep depression and sometimes it is best described as a restless

instability which is most unlike the usual behavior of the individual. Some women have little mental or nervous reaction and others have much, just as there are women who have very little physical discomfort during pregnancy, and may even feel more vigor than usual throughout the nine months when they are carrying a child.

Most men and women have heard something about the physical symptoms of pregnancy but they do not so often realize that it may also have mental accompaniments. Because of this, although they are prepared for morning sickness, diet questions, need of rest, and other physical problems, they are surprised by any sort of mental variation. Not knowing the origin of her trouble, the woman may increase her emotional instability by entertaining a feeling of guilt because she cannot be calm in the face of minor annoyances. One woman dwelt on the fact that she seemed to fly to pieces at any sudden, shrill and prolonged noise, such as a teasing pull at the doorbell by her older children, until she wondered if she were losing her sanity. When told by her physician that she was only suffering from a state of heightened sensitivity, she taught her family not to make the kind of noises that disturbed her, and trained herself to think of something else when she could not get out of earshot of an exasperating noise.

The husband, finding his wife different, more irritable or less responsible, or more prone to be depressed, or excited, searches for some motive for her change or possibly convinces himself that she blames him for the pregnancy or regrets her marriage, or is unhappy because she is with child. He may express criticism of her conduct and thereby make it harder for his wife to regain her usual equability of temper. If he finds her surprisingly quarrelsome, instead of recognizing the cause he may become angry himself or rebuke her for her conduct. The understanding husband will be prepared for the emotional and nervous variations of his wife during pregnancy and if they occur he will not react against them in such a way as to make them all the more serious.

Because pregnancy has a psychic aspect it also has a mental hygiene significance. Worry is one of the mental liabilities that is apt to appear in the pregnant woman. Aside from any physical disturbance of the body tending to produce it, the situation in which the woman finds herself, especially in her first pregnancy, is such as to encourage anxiety and fear. If the woman recognizes that she can help herself and her growing child by maintaining a wholesome mental hygiene

program she will seek self-control. A sensible means of doing this is to find a doctor competent to take her case and to put upon him the responsibility of safeguarding her pregnancy, thus replacing worry with confidence. We know from experiment and observation that worry always has a deleterious effect upon the activities of the body which in the case of pregnancy may be consequential. In no way can the wife help herself and her child, on the psychic side of pregnancy, so much as by maintaining a calm, serene and confident outlook upon life in general and on her own situation in particular.

**Effect of earlier background.** The woman usually brings to her pregnancy attitudes built up from earlier experiences that help or hinder her in maintaining mental stability. Her position is similar to that of the newly married wife whose sex reactions reflect innumerable suggestions or experiences from the earlier days of childhood. It proves an advantage for the woman to face the impulse to worry about her predicament and to go back if she can and discover the sources of her anxiety or protest. Even if she cannot get at the beginning she can recognize that her anxieties are not spontaneous impulses or rational judgment but the reappearance of former impressions. Fortunately these suggestions may be helpful rather than troublesome, and it is the business of a modern parent to build into the girl's life attitudes toward pregnancy that will help rather than hurt when the experience comes. The following case is an illustration of the result of a parental training that purposed from the start to build into the girl favorable conditions for pregnancy.

The following case represents an unfavorable conditioning.

#### *Case 32*

Meditation upon whether or not I want to become a mother leaves me in the throes of a medley of emotions. In the presence of a curly-headed, dimply little girl, or a chubby small boy with a fat little tummy and manish ways, my answer would be immediate and in the affirmative. After deliberate calculation of the discomforts that accompany pregnancy and the misfortunes possible in the actual birth experience, my sentimental emotions are for a time overcome and I am left in a quandary. Perhaps I have received too vivid descriptions of serious deliveries and too few descriptions of normal ones, which have left me with the belief that at the crucial moment I should be literally "scared to death."

This fear feeling might be traced back and attributed to childhood conditioning. My mother practically became an invalid with each pregnancy,

and while I now understand that her lot would have been easier had she received more efficient medical care, I am not sure this knowledge will ever completely eradicate the deep impression made upon me by seeing her suffer. Neither did being the older of seven children in a family of poor financial means, where the greater burden of their care became my lot, prove conducive to the love of children. Instead, for many years my reaction was a belligerent one, for there was no justice, according to my reasoning, in the arrival of other children when those already existing were sometimes deprived of their just dues.

To me children meant confinement when I wanted to be free to play. They were a burden, a considerable nuisance, requiring constant vigilance and nose-wiping. Not until my younger brothers and sisters grew up and became more and more devoted to me and dependent upon my decisions did I begin to realize what the love and loyalty of children could mean. So, slowly but surely, a desire for children of my very own began gradually to steal its way into my consciousness, becoming increasingly urgent as I grew older.

Most interesting is the fact that since marriage my longing for children has greatly diminished. No doubt this is because a new husband so completely absorbs his wife's affection, or it may have been that so intense a desire for children before marriage was mere rationalization and what I really wanted was a husband's love and companionship.

Notwithstanding, the mother instinct is ever present—sometimes consciously and at other times apparently dormant. My present feeling is difficult to analyze, for while I still imagine at times that I want children, I find myself wishing that there were some different manner by which they might arrive. One day I am sure I should not mind the ordeal; the following day I shudder at the thought of the body undergoing such an experience. A great deal of the time I am fascinated by the thought. Much reading of modern literature on the subject is slowly tearing down what surely must be exaggerated fear, and I cannot honestly believe that the experience when it comes will find me less brave than I ought to be.

**Mental disturbances.** Many women have a marked mental instability during their menses. A similar reaction to body condition, in greater degree, occurs in women who react excessively to the physiological changes associated with pregnancy. Their mental instability takes different forms and varies widely in degree. It ranges from fear to a temporary insanity. A common condition is pronounced irritability. The environmental conditions are responded to with exaggeration or on the contrary the response may be slower and more feeble than that characteristic of the individual. When the instability accompany-



ing pregnancy takes the form of a genuine psychosis it is probable that the body changes and physical strain are proving too much for an inherently nervous constitution. Mengert suggests that the neurosis commonly takes a gastric form.<sup>1</sup> It is reasonable to suppose that many women who complain of morning sickness are psychically reacting to the knowledge that they are pregnant, and that once they are adjusted to the situation this distress will cease. Morning sickness is found in cases where women wrongly supposed themselves pregnant and their physical disturbance disappears as soon as they are convinced that they are not with child. Even serious persistent vomiting during pregnancy seems at times to have a psychopathic origin.

The natural nervous strain associated with the endocrine and other changes of the body has added to it fear, protest, and worry so that emotional stress is added to the tension coming from the physical conditions of pregnancy and the burden becomes for a few women too great to be carried. A temporary neurosis is the result.

How far the mind can go in complicating pregnancy is suggested by experiences of women who wrongly think themselves pregnant. This condition is known as phantom pregnancy or, in medical terms, *pseudocyesis*. Usually the victim wishes to have children and finally believes that she has conceived. She may have morning sickness and be convinced that her menstruation has ceased and that her uterus is enlarging. Sometimes the state is born not of desire but of fear. Subjectively such a woman goes through the symptoms of pregnancy as she understands them and insists, in spite of negative examinations by her physician, that she is pregnant. There are women who have had this experience not once but repeatedly, indicating that they are victims of some serious form of mental disorder that takes this peculiar expression.

**Transfer.** In psychoanalytic literature much is written about the transfer of those in need of emotional support who fixate on the psychiatrist to whom they have come for help. It is a very human reaction under emotional stress and naturally is likely to appear during pregnancy. The usual thing is for the woman to fixate upon the obstetrician to whom she has given her case with confidence. By so doing she increases his opportunity to serve her and the relationship may be used to lessen the anxieties that normally would come

<sup>1</sup> W. S. Mengert, "Psycho-Therapy in Obstetrics and Gynecology," *Mental Hygiene*, April, 1931, p. 393.

to the woman during her pregnancy, particularly if it be her first experience. The psychiatrist has to recognize the danger of this relationship because it is his business to attempt to bring the patient to complete self-support. The situation of the obstetrician is different since time itself brings an end to the situation that has led the woman to seek an outside prop. It does, however, emphasize the need of having a doctor whose personality pleases the woman and in whom she can have complete confidence. In some few instances, when the wife is visibly unhappy in her family, the doctor does find a fixation developing on the part of his patient which might prove troublesome were it not wisely recognized. Confessions that have been made to me by women as to this fact are convincing.

**Maternal impression.** It is amazing how persistent is the superstition that the pregnant woman may by her behavior mark the child. This idea of maternal impression lingers in spite of the fact that science repudiates it absolutely, for there is no physiological basis for it in the relationship existing between mother and child. The mother does not come into direct nervous contact with the growing life, and even her blood stream furnishes the necessary nutriment for the growth of the child indirectly, but it is a fortunate woman who does not hear from some one during her pregnancy a disturbing story of a baby that was deformed or physically or mentally marked in some way by an impression received from the mother. Science flatly denies the possibility of this and there is not a shred of evidence that it ever happens.

It is a harmful superstition because it creates untold fears in many women while they carry their child, since nearly every day some untoward thing may happen which the fearful mother may imagine will injure her child. Malformation and markings are rare. We do not know their cause at present, but the facts of embryology assure us that they are not the result of maternal impression. Nothing could be more disturbing to the mother who finds herself unusually irritable or depressed than to believe that her state of mind is producing a similar disposition in the life of her child. Nothing could be more terrifying than to suppose that the accidental seeing of some deformed person will bring about the same condition in the body of her unborn baby. Women who come to the prospective mother with such disturbing folklore should be shown the door.

**The man's reaction.** Among some savage tribes it was customary for the husband to counterfeit the symptoms of pregnancy during the ordeal of his wife. This is suggestive of a fact that must not be overlooked. Husbands as well as wives have worry and emotional disturbance during the wife's pregnancy. The man may be anxious because the wife is worrying or he may overstress the dangers of childbirth because of conditioning that he has received. He may build up guilt feelings, blaming himself for the apparent unhappiness, discomfort or worry of his wife. He may face genuine economic difficulties as a consequence of the pregnancy and the coming of another member of the family. He may strongly protest when he sees his wife suffering or when he faces the thought of the pain she must go through to deliver the child. He may react considerably to the psychic differences he detects in his wife. His reaction in turn may increase her nervousness and his lack of calmness make it difficult for her to maintain good self-control. Rarely, a neurotic husband becomes physically ill each time his wife conceives and continues so throughout her pregnancy, recovering as soon as the baby is safely delivered.

It is important that the man scrutinize himself and recognize his own emotional dangers when his wife becomes pregnant. The psychic aspects of pregnancy cannot be conceived as significant only for the wife. They constitute a family problem including the husband and older children, if there be any.

**Budget.** For many American couples, especially if they have been recently married, the knowledge that the wife is pregnant brings forward an economic problem. It should be faced squarely like any other expenditure and, as far as possible, a careful estimation of the cost of adequate care and delivery should be made early in the period, and plans laid in accord with the available resources.

The physician's fees vary from place to place, and there is often in a sizable community a considerable difference in the charges of the different doctors. Hospital charges also vary from place to place, and the choice between a private and a two-bed or three-bed room or a ward in the hospital, whether one has or has not a private nurse, and other matters concerning which there may be a personal decision also influence the cost. If it is necessary to arrange for an extended period of payment, there should be the utmost frankness. In some places this matter has been made a definite policy and babies are paid for by installment just as gas stoves, refrigerators, and automobiles are pur-

chased on a long time payment basis. Such a scheme is surely much more just than to have the family worried by charges that cannot be met or to have the wife suffer because of inadequate care during her pregnancy or childbirth.

**Hospital versus home delivery.** One of the first questions that arises as soon as an attempt is made to plan for the pregnancy budget is whether the wife shall go to a hospital or be delivered at home. Probably when everything is taken into account it is cheaper to go to the hospital, and this ought to be true since the hospital is definitely organized to provide such service and is ready to do it efficiently. When the cost seems to be greater the explanation may be that the home delivery costs less merely because it offers inferior conditions. Assuming the same standards, the hospital would have the economic advantage.

It is easier to know the probable cost of delivery if the woman goes to the hospital, because after consultation with the doctor regarding what should be expected one can learn from the hospital exactly what the charge will be. This information is not so easily obtained regarding a home delivery, because it is difficult to know in advance just what supplies will be required in an individual delivery. Moreover if any complication arises the expense is likely to be much greater than if the patient had gone to the hospital at the beginning.

Choice between going to the hospital and having the child at home involves more than a mere question of cost. The following seem to be the most common motives that influence people in making their choice.

For the hospital: 1. The hospital is equipped with a staff for taking care of people who are ill. This is not the normal business of a home, which has neither the routine, the equipment, nor the personnel for adequately taking care of a woman in childbirth.

2. The hospital is prepared for any emergency that arises. In case of trouble in a home delivery the wife must either be sent immediately to a hospital or a specialist brought to the home, either of which proceedings runs up the expense far above what it would have been had she gone to the hospital at the beginning.

3. A woman who goes to a hospital gets continuous attention. Even if a day and a night nurse are secured, the home cannot give equal attention because the woman at the hospital has the advantage of various specialists on the staff, and an interne always on hand, as



well as a wide range of equipment and supplies within reach in case of need.

4. The woman at the hospital is set free from household responsibility in a way that the woman in the home cannot often be. The fact that she is within call means that usually questions regarding household matters will be brought to her. She will also be more conscious of household problems and may be in a frame of mind to exaggerate trivial disturbances. This freedom from household contact is particularly important during the lying-in period when the woman needs relaxation and rest.

5. The birth experience when the woman goes to the hospital is not forced upon members of the family as is likely to happen when delivery is at the house. This is particularly important in the case of young children who may exaggerate the painful aspects of delivery, and be adversely conditioned toward childbearing. The woman in labor at home worries lest she attract the attention of passers-by or neighbors, and is troubled by the knowledge that her household suffers with her. A nervous husband may be harder for the physician to handle than the two patients, mother and child.

6. It is harder for the unscrupulous mother to break dietary rules in a hospital convalescence than at home.

7. The new mother and father are free from responsibility for the care of the baby so long as mother and child are in a hospital.

8. A busy obstetrician cannot squander his time running about the country to spend hours at widely separated homes, awaiting the moment when his services may be needed. Only by bringing his patients together under one roof can he serve them adequately.

9. During the lying-in period, neighbors and friends run in much more freely when the woman is confined at home and may wear her out because her family is too polite to limit their calls.

For the home: 1. There are those who object on the basis of sentiment to having their child born in a hospital.

2. There are women to whom the hospital brings suggestions that are detrimental to the peace of mind and confidence desired in childbirth. For example, many ignorant women fear the hospital, and their emotional reaction, if they are forced to go to a hospital, may be unfavorable. It has to be recognized that there are a minority of educated women who would have an emotional hostility toward delivery at a hospital.

3. The woman who has her baby at home may have the advantage of a choice of nurses so that she may be sure that the relationship between herself and her nurse will be similar to that between herself and her doctor—one of confidence. As a result of statements made by mothers, it is my opinion that this is the most substantial reason of those usually given for home delivery. There is without doubt, as one would expect, a very small proportion of nurses who are sadistically inclined, and instances have been reported of nurses open to this suspicion who in minor ways have made the experience of the mother at the hospital more painful and more uncomfortable than was necessary. (However, a special nurse can be engaged at the hospital at a moderate additional cost.)

4. Many women recognize in home delivery an opportunity to cater to their personal idiosyncrasies, particularly in matters of diet.

There are cases in which the discussion whether delivery shall be at the hospital or the home is beside the point. The matter is settled when it is clear to the physician that the case is a complicated one that may require the services of a specialist at delivery. Then the hospital is indicated and any other choice is unsafe. There are other cases in which the woman in the village or rural community cannot easily go to a hospital because the nearest one is inaccessible. So long as our rural hospitals are few and far between, many country women whose delivery promises to be normal will plan to have their babies at home instead of going to a distant city when the end of pregnancy seems near, or running risk of having the child born *en route*.

In the case of pregnancies that indicate that a Cæsarean operation must be made, or when there is risk of some pathological development, the hospital is imperative, even though it means that the wife must go a considerable distance away from her home.

**Clothes for the baby.** This text is not the proper place to introduce any discussion of the minor details connected with pregnancy, childbirth, and the proper care of the baby. Reference is made to the subject of clothes for the coming child merely that this subject may be used as an example of the modern way of dealing with the more trivial preparations.

The time was when the getting ready of the baby's clothes was no small matter. A great deal of labor was expended and a quantity of fancy garments were made by hand. Not to have these to exhibit to

friends and neighbors meant a loss in social prestige. This, fortunately, has all passed and sensible people no longer waste their time in the making of unsuitable and labor-consuming baby clothes. The clothing is simple, chosen for its utility, and for the most part is purchased. This modern method is a good illustration of the kind of program in dealing with minor matters associated with pregnancy that husband and wife need to insist upon.

It is more important for the wife to be out in the sunshine than it is that the child should have prettily made clothes which will have a short usage if they have any utility at all. Sensible people dress their baby for comfort and for health and never for display. In almost any community will be found some people who frown upon such good sense, but it is as well to begin at this point as later and to build up an unyielding indifference to conventions that are not for the interest of mother or child. In a few moments in any good department store the baby's clothes can be purchased, or they can be sent by mail. Since the infant changes rapidly and soon outgrows his first clothes, it is good judgment not to over-stock at the start.

#### COSTS OF PRENATAL CARE AND DELIVERY

*Berkeley, California.* The total cost of obstetric service to Berkeley mothers averaged \$213.75 per case. In half of the cases the charges were \$179.41 or less. If the average is calculated on the basis of all the cases (390), including patients who did not pay anything, it would be reduced to \$206.07. As these costs include every item that could legitimately be included in the actual cost of obstetric care, they give a good idea of such cost to Berkeley mothers. It is safe to state that the total cost of the average obstetric case in Berkeley will be somewhere between \$200 and \$215. In exceptional cases, and especially in those with complications, the cost may run to \$1,000 or even \$1,800.<sup>2</sup> (See opposite page.)

*Cape Cod Section of Massachusetts.* Prenatal care: Visiting nurse receives 50 cents a visit in Brewster, 75 cents in most Cape Cod towns. Doctor's office visit is \$2.00. Delivery: Usual fee for normal delivery is \$25.00. This includes four visits after delivery. The one doctor in B, however, charges \$50.00. Assistance of B visiting nurse at de-

<sup>2</sup> R. A. Holt, "The Cost of Obstetric Service to Berkeley Mothers," *Jour. of American Medical Association*, May 17, 1930, Vol. XCIV, pp. 1561-65.

COST OF OBSTETRIC SERVICE TO BERKELEY MOTHERS <sup>3</sup>

<i>Specified Service</i>	<i>Number of Mothers Receiving Specified Service</i>	<i>Total Amount Charged for Specified Service</i>	<i>Mean Cost in Dollars</i>	<i>Median Cost in Dollars</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
Physician .....	343	\$31,598.50	92.12±2.20	73.87±2.76	60.47±1.55
Midwife .....	9	298.00	33.11±2.00	32.50±2.51	8.90±1.41
Trained nurse ..	53	6,159.00	116.21±12.51	89.00±15.68	135.02±8.84
Nurses' board ..	42	707.50	16.85±1.95	14.16±2.44	18.78±1.38
Practical nurse .	63	3,720.50	59.05±3.30	53.12±4.13	38.86±2.33
Home help .....	103	6,170.70	59.91±4.33	42.08±5.43	65.11±3.06
Ambulance ....	33	204.80	6.21±0.34	7.60±0.43	2.91±0.24
Hospital room ..	181	14,817.75	81.87±1.76	81.66±2.20	35.17±1.25
Hospital ward ..	121	7,474.20	61.77±1.32	61.75±1.65	21.56±0.93
Delivery room ..	180	1,800.00	10.00 ....	.....	.....
	*100	1,500.00	15.00 ....	.....	.....
	4	83.20	20.80 ....	.....	.....
Operating room.	16	218.80	13.67±1.60	7.50±2.00	9.49±1.13
Anesthetic .....	210	1,138.00	5.42±0.20	5.54±0.25	4.30±0.14
Laboratory .....	75	247.00	3.29±0.22	2.28±0.27	2.82±0.16
Dressings & drugs not segregated.	149	790.24	5.30±0.13	5.64±0.16	2.37±0.09
Dressings .....	92	383.70	4.17±0.15	5.30±0.19	2.12±0.10
Drugs .....	102	249.23	2.44±0.13	1.84±0.16	2.03±0.09
Other hospital expenses .....	171	404.03	2.35±0.11	1.86±0.14	2.12±0.08
Care of infant ..	19	222.50	11.71±2.06	9.90±2.58	13.35±1.46
Circumcision ...	89	1,441.25	16.19±0.59	18.75±0.74	8.28±0.42
Other operative costs .....	10	326.30	32.63±10.59	13.27±7.50	49.65±7.49

\* This includes \$5 per case for dressings and drugs not segregated.

livery is \$3.00; elsewhere on the Cape it is \$5.00. This is customary, in addition to the doctor. Practical Nurse: (Most Cape Cod mothers employ one for two to three weeks after confinement) \$20.00 to \$25.00 a week. Such a nurse does everything for the mother, baby, and the household—a truly superhuman task. Hospital care: Very few of our mothers go to a hospital. If they do they pay:

\$10 delivery room fee (normal case)

1 a day for care of baby at hospital

42 per week private room

25 per week in ward (four beds)

35 per week in two bed ward

The doctor's fee is not different from home delivery.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1562.

<sup>4</sup> Reported by correspondents.



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*City of ten thousand in Rhode Island.* Cost in this city is as follows:

- \$25 doctor's charge for delivery
- 10 delivery room fee
- 25 and up for private room per week
- 18 and up for ward per week.<sup>5</sup>

*City of twenty thousand, Michigan.* \$50.00 deposit covers everything for two weeks, including delivery.

If patient has town doctor she has to sever that connection when going to the hospital as the hospital doctors take all cases. Rooms have two and three beds in them. No single rooms.

If patient is too poor to pay she applies to the Judge of Probate in her county who investigates the case and, if satisfactory, gives the patient an order to the hospital. The hospital sends her bill to the state. The state sends it back to the patient's county, where it is paid. A patient may come to the hospital doctor during pregnancy if she thinks she needs care.

There are four maternity hospitals in this city, each owned by some doctor.

In one the flat rate for room and care of baby is \$21.00 a week. The doctor's fee is \$75.00.

In another the flat rate is from \$150 to \$200, for everything including the doctor's fee and two weeks in the hospital.

The S—— (Catholic) hospital is considered the best in town and Dr. C. is considered the best baby doctor. His patient has to go to this hospital. Dr. C.'s charge is \$100. This includes prenatal care, care after birth of baby till mother is considered well, and furnishes a pediatrician for the baby's diet for one year.

In his hospital the charges are:

- \$15.00 for anesthetic
- 5.00 per day for room and meals
- 1.00 per day for care of baby
- 7.00 per day for day nurse
- 7.00 per night, if night nurse is needed
- 1.00 per day for nurse's meals

<sup>5</sup> Reported by correspondents.

A charge is made for every dressing and all medicine. A charge is made for a laboratory test to see if the baby has an enlarged thymus gland. A charge is made for the baby's washing. A young mother who went there told me her bill for three weeks in the hospital was \$160.00. Then her fee to Dr. C. was \$100.00.

*Baker Memorial Hospital, Boston.* Minimum fee is \$183 per, including the doctor's fee, delivery room and anesthesia fee, and two weeks' hospital care in a four-bed room. A single room would raise this to approximately \$211.<sup>6</sup>

*Village of four thousand, Pennsylvania.* It goes without saying that the prenatal care is almost nil, but it does include urinalyses.

Doctor:

Delivery charges .....	\$ 20.00
Prenatal care .....	2.00

Hospital:

12 days plus delivery charges .....	86.00
Domestic—eight weeks .....	50.00

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\$158.00<sup>7</sup>

*Village of one thousand, New Hampshire.* As you know, the matter of cost of having a baby varies greatly according to the individual requirements of the patient. Some women require and expect professional care and attention from the beginning of pregnancy to several weeks after delivery, while others only call the physician at the time of delivery, which of course makes a wide variation in the cost, but the average medical cost for caring for a maternity case in this locality (which is a fair sample of N. H. towns) is about \$35.00.

The difference in cost at home or at a hospital also has a wide variation according to her individual requirements. A woman can have a baby at a hospital and have good general care for \$17.00 per week with an additional cost of \$5.00 for the care of the baby, making \$22.00 per week for the hospital and \$30.00 for the doctor's fee; usually two weeks' stay in hospital is all that is necessary, totaling \$74.00 for hospital care and doctor's fee.

If the woman stays at home and depends on friends or members of

<sup>6</sup> *Boston Herald*, April 8, 1932.

<sup>7</sup> Furnished by correspondent, Mother's budget giving complete expense.

her family for care, her doctor's fee of about \$35.00 would practically cover the entire cost. These estimates are for normal and uncomplicated cases. At the present time the Cæsarean method of delivery is being done frequently (many times unnecessarily) which makes an expensive confinement. The usual cost of this is from \$100 to \$250 in this community. Of the 1,700 cases of confinement I have attended I have only had two cases where a Cæsarean was necessary.

Twenty-five or thirty years ago I attended hundreds of obstetric cases for \$8.00 to \$10.00, which was practically all the expense of the mother and baby.<sup>8</sup>

*Village in North Carolina.* Average time in hospital, 12 days.

Prenatal care (doctor) .....	\$ 35.00
Delivery (doctor) .....	40.00
Medicine .....	5.00
Hospital .....	65.00
Nurses .....	65.00
	<hr/>
	\$210.00

Cases which are not delivered in a hospital will be the same as the above except that there will be no hospital bill and nurses will average only \$50.00 instead of \$65.00.

*Colored*

Prenatal (doctor) .....	\$ 4.00	} They don't call on doctor unless they are having trouble.
Delivery (doctor) .....	25.00	
Medicine .....	2.00	
Nurse .....	15.00	

Average time in bed, seven days. Very few colored people are delivered in a hospital.<sup>9</sup>

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## CHAPTER XXV

### THE BIRTH EXPERIENCE

**Ignorance and fear.** Nothing is more conducive to needless anxiety and fear than ignorance. In no human experience is this more evident than in childbirth. Countless women give testimony to the horror they went through during their first pregnancy and birth experience, largely because of the vagueness of their knowledge of delivery. Even if this were not true there would still be good reason for acquiring an intelligent understanding of what childbirth means. Neither husband nor wife can make their best preparation for a coming event the nature of which they do not understand. It is, of course, not necessary that either of them should have detailed knowledge of the birth experience, but it is an advantage to comprehend what happens when a child is born.

It is most important to keep in mind that there is no standard experience as to the length of time delivery takes, the amount of pain, and other details concerning which women greatly vary. Knowing this helps to protect the wife from the dread created by stories of unusual and difficult cases. The spectacular here as elsewhere attracts attention, and there seems to be a subtle but stubborn maliciousness which leads some women to rehearse to the prospective mother a complete repertoire of dreadful tales collected apparently for just such a purpose. It is the general ignorance of both men and women regarding what happens in childbirth which provides such an attractive opportunity for these women who under the guise of sympathy stimulate fear.

**The mechanics of delivery.** The uterus is not a mere receptacle in which the child may remain safely during his prenatal growth; it is also the means of pushing him at the appropriate time into the world outside the mother where he may attain independent existence. It is composed, apart from its lining, of interwoven muscular fibers which in addition to supporting the unborn child as he increases in size also are capable of exerting the force necessary to expel him from the uterus. This is accomplished by rhythmic contrac-

tions. These usually start in a mild manner but increase in intensity and are then felt by the mother as pains. They lead to the stretching open of the mouth of the womb and assist in the child's expulsion. The baby itself, contrary to what once was thought, remains passive as he is forced from his prenatal quarters out of his mother's body into the world.

**The three stages of labor.** For advantages of description, childbirth is considered as having three separate stages. The first, often called that of dilatation, has for its purpose the opening of the mouth of the womb sufficiently to allow the baby to escape. The opening has to be greatly enlarged and this is gradually accomplished by the contracting muscles forcing the amniotic sac, or bag of waters, as it is called, through the cervical canal where it acts as a sort of wedge and stretches the opening. As the uterus contracts it also tends to shorten. This pulls farther apart the lips of the cervix over that portion of the bag of waters extending outside the opening of the womb. When this opening has sufficiently stretched it is usual for the bag of waters to burst and the fluid to gush out. This ends the first stage of labor.

The second stage consists of the passage of the baby out of the womb and through the vagina into the world. At the breaking of the bag of waters the uterus contracts directly upon the child more and more strongly, forcing him toward the pelvic opening. During this process the mother's pains are more frequent and stronger, accompanied with the feeling that there is something which needs to be expelled. Now the muscles of the abdominal wall contribute to this irresistible impulse to expel the baby. The vagina stretches and finally the baby is pushed out, commonly coming headforemost.

During the third stage occurs what is known as the afterbirth. The umbilical cord still extends from the mother through the vagina and vulva to the baby. It is severed by the doctor, and the child who has already started breathing enters upon his independent existence. The uterus expels the placenta, detaching it from the uterine surface and pushing it also out. The uterus still makes painful contractions which are known as after pains, but these gradually cease and the mother enters upon the involution which ends only when she has returned to normal condition.

The uterus after the delivery is left in a condition suggestive of an open wound, making infection easy. Because of this the greatest surgical care is taken by doctor and nurse throughout the delivery

process. It is carelessness at this point that accounts for much of the perils of childbirth. Competent medical care requires as exact a technique at childbirth as at an operation for appendicitis. This does not mean that childbirth is akin to a major operation but that it provides as favorable conditions for the development of septic poisoning, if it does not receive the careful technique which we assume as a matter of course in competent surgery.

It is well for both husband and wife to understand that during all three stages there may be discharge of blood and mucus, and this should not be interpreted as pathological or alarming. It would be not only impossible but misleading to attempt in a book of this sort any interpretation of unusual happenings and their significance. The layman would surely misunderstand and nearly always exaggerate occurrences which the physician is professionally prepared to interpret and, when necessary, to handle.

**The use of anesthetics.** Although the first use of anesthetics is still a matter of controversy, it is generally held by scientists that in Boston in 1846 the first successful public demonstration of the use of ether took place. Anesthesia was first employed in childbirth by a Scottish physician, Sir James Simpson, who began to use chloroform some months later than the Boston demonstration. This procedure of his was violently reacted against, since it was generally held that it was immoral and contrary to religious teaching for him to attempt to remove the curse of Eve. It is said that the use of chloroform during the labor of Queen Victoria established the good repute of anesthesia in childbirth.

Unlike the use of anesthesia in a major operation, there cannot be during the entire period of labor a total loss of consciousness. This would prevent the mother's doing her part in the expelling of the child from the uterus. Anesthetics have to be administered judiciously and it is in the latter part of the second stage that a little ether or chloroform is used. This lessens the pain but does not remove consciousness completely. Commonly this is done just at the time the baby is born and the mother is permitted for a few moments to sink into unconsciousness. Ether and chloroform are the most used anesthetics still, although nitrous oxide, laughing gas, and other means of producing anesthesia are sometimes used. In selected cases rectal anesthesia proves efficacious. What is known as twilight sleep, produced by hypodermic injections of two powerful narcotic drugs, attracted much

attention some years ago with its promise of a painless delivery, but this method has been generally discarded, because it has proved uncertain and risky, and in any case its successful use required great skill.

**What the laity needs to know.** There are happenings associated with delivery about which the average man and woman have lack of knowledge likely to lead to unnecessary worry. 1, Stitches: Since the woman in childbirth has to stretch greatly to bring forth the child, there is some risk, especially at the first delivery, that she be torn in the process. If this happens it does not necessarily mean that the doctor has been careless or unskillful, nor is it a matter about which there needs to be anxiety. The physician will repair the torn tissue either at the time of the birth or later, according to the nature of the tear.

If the lacerations are repaired at once, the stitches will be put in commonly between the end of the second stage and the beginning of the third when the woman is under the influence of the anesthetic. She will not suffer and the stitches will not cause her discomfort or become a source of danger. In other cases the repair will be done when the woman has returned to normal health, and in some cases nothing will need to be done. The woman should be told whether a repair of lacerations was made and if not, why not, that she may know whether there is need in the future of attention to a matter that may greatly concern her health.

In the past, it is likely that there has been a disposition too often to let nature take care of itself and trouble has occurred years after as a result of the neglect. It is therefore a sign of competent service if the physician examines the patient several weeks after the birth of the child to see whether there is any need of further treatment.

2, Instrumental delivery: This means the physician has used obstetrical forceps, a pair of thin blades, to assist the mother in the delivery. The fact that the use of this instrument will hasten delivery becomes a temptation to the wife or husband who feels that the physician should do something to hurry the process and put an end to the pain. Whether or not instrumental delivery is to be undertaken is a matter of judgment and should not be influenced by the emotions of husband and wife.

3, Position of child: It is usual for the child to be born head first, but in a very small proportion of cases the baby is so placed in the



womb that he has to come out buttocks first. If this happens there need not be worry, for it is a matter the doctor is prepared to handle. Indeed, in most cases the birth proceeds spontaneously just as it would if the position were the more usual one. In other cases there is need of instrumental delivery, which the physician is prepared to give.

4, Cæsarean section: There are occasionally women who cannot give birth to children in a normal way because their pelvic arch is too contracted. The structure of the skeleton does not give sufficient space to permit the usual birth process. There are other cases in which it seems unwise for the child to be born the normal way. Under such circumstances the physician resorts to Cæsarean section, as it is called. An opening in the abdomen is made and the child is taken from the mother. Carried through by a competent surgeon the Cæsarean method is not dangerous, and in thousands of cases it has permitted motherhood under circumstances which otherwise would risk the death of either the woman or the child. It is, of course, an operation requiring exact technique and should be carried out in a hospital under favorable conditions. The advantage of the pre-birth examination is in part the fact that the doctor discovers at the beginning cases in which the woman's bodily structure demonstrates that the Cæsarean method of birth is the only feasible one.

**Intelligent coöperation.** Every physician realizes the value of the patient's intelligent coöperation during childbirth, but even when this is impressed upon the woman, the advice given is not always precise enough to give the woman a clew as to how she can best do her part. Her failure to understand what she should do to help often lengthens the period of delivery and adds unnecessarily to her suffering. Unquestionably at times the woman has an emotional protest against the experience and hangs back, thus prolonging delivery.

### *Case 33*

Mrs. G., who was perfectly normal and whose child at length was born without instruments or any complication, had an unusually long period of delivery, and she now thinks that she fought subconsciously against making any effort herself because of her hostility to the idea of having a child, and that her final pushing was almost against her will. She now believes that, had she been given any idea of the importance of a coöperative attitude, she would easily have accomplished the birth, for which she was particularly well-prepared physically, according to the doctor who could not understand her failure quickly to deliver the child.

A nurse was heard by a mother at a hospital sneering at the woman who in the neighboring room was struggling against the preliminary pains of her first childbirth. "Why doesn't she stop screaming and get to work?" The probability is that no one had told the woman that only by closing her mouth could she push and that her expression of pain was merely delaying delivery. In contrast with this, a young mother whose child was coming too fast was told to hold back. She tried but the pain seemed irresistible, and she continued pushing. She wanted to coöperate but had no idea how to do it. Had she been told to pant like a dog with her mouth open she would have lessened the impulse to press and would have accomplished what the doctor desired.

A better recognition by nurses and doctors of the emotional reaction of the patient also would lessen the needless anxiety of many mothers after delivery. It is impressive and surprising to find so many mothers confessing that they thought their child dead because no reference was made to the baby after delivery was over, or that they took it for granted that there must be some serious thing wrong with the child. It is pathetic to have them tell how, being filled with fear, they inspected the child's body little by little, assuming that they were sure to discover some malformation because neither doctor nor nurse had assured them that the child was normal. Psychological technique in all medicine and surgery still falls behind the physical, but in childbirth particularly there is need of including in the routine quick assurance for the mother who has brought forth a normal and healthy child.

#### *Case 34*

*Patient of a Chicago specialist.* I was delighted to wake up with a backache and a few stringy crampy pains. At last this thing was started. These were unmistakable symptoms. Miss R. said backache perhaps and pains that started up in a curve and then down. I could see her describing this chain of events with her index finger tracing the curve. If I scrutinized these pains—carefully enough, they were such mild fluttery things—I could imagine their taking the prescribed course. I wondered, but didn't want to think too much, about their becoming more severe. After all the joking I had had with my friends about whether to be courageous or not, to yell or not to yell, I did rather want to be courageous. Keep that cool part of my head cool and removed. After all, what was the value of building up a reserve place of objectivity if you couldn't use

it at a time like this. It would be rather sport to exercise this acquired faculty of mine and get a lot out of this experience. Then too, I wanted to put a laugh on the girls I knew who recently had babies but somewhat pityingly indulged my views on objectivity. They smirked and said, "You'll feel differently, dear, after it's over." I hated their damn superiority.

Finally I called Dr. L. I hated to call him so early, because the pains were such mild things. He suggested that I come down to the hospital at about 8. Then it was 5:30. I went back to bed, smoked, and searched every pain for increasing ferocity. They remained the same, and I began to think it was all a neurotic longing to get *it* over with. Perhaps I did fear labor more than I thought and now my unconscious was having its innings. Well, time would tell. . . .

But I was anxious, so at 7 o'clock we all got up and had breakfast. I had a false excited gayety, laughing at the whole thing and quite certain that it was a false alarm. Mother, Bob, and I rode to the hospital in great gayety, Mother begging the driver to be careful and I suggesting that the more bumps the better—we might deliver it en route and save all sorts of bother. Yellow Cab men were noted obstetricians!

But all the time there was this lurking in my head: Could I go through with it without being a baby? Then, why not be a baby? What availeth one to pent up one's feelings? Who cared whether I yelled or not? Why, nurses very likely were used to yelling. Didn't Dr. D.'s book on childbirth mention lamentation as naturally as forceps and presentation? Then I gripped Bob's hand and was pleased at the reassuring pressure. Perhaps the better part of valor was to take things as well as one could as they came. Now, he must be reassured. My jesting and laughing disturbed him. He no doubt saw through it to my anxiety and hated to see me getting excited and out of hand.

Then the pains left and I felt—it is a false alarm—and wished dully that it were not. I had been so cross of late, so easily hurt, so quick to voice disapproval, so alternating in mood. I never wept so easily. It was sort of hard on Mother and Bob. They stood it all with very good grace, however. But it needed to come off; I hated the inactivity of the last few weeks; I began to hate the whole idea of having a baby.

By the time we arrived at the hospital all my pains had disappeared. I had nothing to show for all this commotion! They took me in just the same and went through their rites of internal and external cleansing. Now it surely was a joke. I couldn't for the life of me find a pain.

After being at the hospital awhile, I did manage to scrape up a pain. Soon these were followed by more. Every five minutes or so I had a few twinges for 30 seconds. These continued all day. I recorded them religiously in the flyleaf of the book I was reading. The morning passed

pleasantly enough. An Irish nurse amused me with her tactics with an emotional Jewish lady who Oiled Oiled at a great rate. I was inclined to laugh at her too, but then reflection reminded me, all too poignantly, that I might be laughing out of the other side of my mouth all too soon, and would be chastened by my own pains into a more ready sympathy for my howling fellow sufferer. The day ground itself out. By evening I was tired of the whole business—nagging, trivial pains, on top of little sleep the night before, had finally conquered my reserve. I felt sorry for myself and wept a few tired tears, which made me feel much better. Bob came and the necessity of perking up and presenting a bold front helped to restore me. Then Dr. L. said he would give me some morphine so I could sleep and get up some resistance for what was to come. How did he know so well what I needed!

At about nine at night the pains were more severe and I couldn't help but wriggle around with the discomfort. Bob stayed and rubbed my head, and like a child I liked it. Then he went and morphine came, bless her soul, and I slept until 11:30, when I *did* have pains. In my drowsy state I tried to shove them off—refuse to recognize them, but I couldn't. Either because of the morphine or the pain I lost all feeling of time, except the longing for time to fly. It seemed to me that I was in a room of torment. Nurses came to take heart tones, doctors came to do rectal examinations, some one brought me some water to drink, but these were incidental to the fatalistic recurrence of those pains, pains that made me clench my teeth, that made me gulp the air between my teeth and whistle it down my throat, and that finally drew from me moans and sobs. Then there seemed to be just time to rinse out my mouth with water (I wanted to take a huge mouthful and spit ferociously and angrily on the floor!), when it was the same thing—clenching teeth, drying mouth and pain—oh—when would it stop—oh—now relaxation, but what good was that, for here was another one—the Evil One. I don't know what I did except nonsensically ask every nurse's name that came and think when I could of the time when *that* white wagon would come. If I could live until then. But now everything was confusion—like my childhood terror dream, when I dreamt that I was walking on the lawn and innocently picked up a handkerchief. This handkerchief set off an inferno of monsters and giants, who descended upon me as I descended, like Alice in Wonderland, into the bowels of the earth. As a child I awoke screaming and terrified. Now this dream was actuality. Here was an inexorable fate—something repetitive and terribly sure. No way out except more pain, more torture, except perhaps the white wagon—gas—but such oasis seemed a long way off. Now I clutched my hair, gripped the bed, clenched my teeth, as the pain—the Evil One—started to wave his way from the top of my belly to the bottom. Some one said



"Don't push," but I could not help it. Something was pushing, pushing violently, so I urinated in the bed, or was it "the waters"? I only remember that like a child who has wet herself, I apologized to some one for what I had done. It did not seem important to her. She got a pad, but that was soon spoiled. When the white wagon did come, I thought, "Too soon, too soon, perhaps I am behaving so badly that they are forced to get this over." Shame and defeat for me—moaning and sobbing. It had all gone wrong. I was possessed by something beyond myself, had lost that precious conceited self. As I lay on the operating table, flayed and shaking with the pain, I felt that I, that cool self-sufficient I, had dwindled to a small little box in the very top of my head, and here was my massive, ugly, fleshy frame, ruled and swayed by something greater than I, something that was kneading me, relentlessly and so cruelly to some end. Then other fears assailed me. The room seemed full of people, yet I seemed terribly alone. Terrific loneliness, with this domination of pain. Here were people washing their hands, water running, the anesthetizer arriving, saying, is this where I am wanted? People looking at my genitals under the bright light, but I was all alone, and dwindled to a little box in the top of my head—small and alone.

Now, I was pushing, and a still small voice at my head said, "Hold your breath and push," and that seemed the rightest thing that had been said. But then I did, but I didn't seem to get anywhere. A huge something was distending my anus it felt like, but after pushing it receded into my abdomen again, and the futility oppressed me. Again and again it happened, and just as I was thinking of crawling from the table and onto the cold stone floor, to supplicate on my knees for gas, some one said, "Breathe through your nose, slowly and easily"—such sweetness—I wanted to kiss the rubber something that conveyed this nectar to me. At last some one was good—somewhere. Some one putting long warm stockings on my legs, and a warm sheet. It seemed like warm kindly snow, soft and sweet. But they mustn't cut me before I am under, I wanted to tell them that—but I was gone—to rest.

I woke up feeling that my legs were as big as an elephant's and that my arm across my face was his trunk. I felt superbly happy, so happy I wanted to cry. I must tell them how nice they were. Where was the baby? A girl, a red-pulled-up-into-a-mass-of-wrinkles face was all I saw. That room was nice—some one working over the baby—a dull light, all the pain was gone—just smarting between my legs—stitches I suppose, but such exquisite relief, such moving happiness, over what, God knows. But everything was right again. I was back again. I could smile at anything now. Such pleasant fragments of conversation: Small baby—This

woman kept my diet (friendly pat on the arm)—Shall I call Mr. Long? Yes—You are all so nice—You're nice too—Then taken to my room, and to bed. Such sleep—so happy. . . .

### Case 35

*Delivery in a small southern city hospital.* I remember very little about what happened when my first child was born, and as the nurse told me at the time, it is probably just as well.

The pains came on quite suddenly. I had had some slight pains at rather distant intervals during the day, enough to make me go to the hospital, which was about an hour's drive from my home, since I feared to be caught before I got there, as I had made no arrangements to have the birth take place at home.

My nerves were rather ragged and everything had annoyed me all day, but the pains did not increase either in strength or frequency and neither the doctor nor the nurses expected the birth to take place until the next day.

I had not been in bed more than twenty minutes, however, before the pains began coming about once every two minutes and became much stronger. They forced me to go more or less into contortions. I would double up my left arm under my chin, clenching my fist, then do the same with my right, then pull up my knees, then thrust my left fist up over my head, do the same with my right fist, and then kick downward with both legs. I did this over and over, unable to change the order or the violence of my movements at all. It made me furious. The doubling up and thrusting with my fists and the kicking with my legs did not help me feel any better, and I could not see why an intelligent woman should be forced to go through such a silly performance. I could not even console myself with the thought that things were being hurried up, for the pains were not the kind that result when the child is being pushed along.

The doctor was called by a nurse who told him she didn't think he would be needed that night. Nevertheless he came, looked at me, remarked that I didn't seem to be very badly off yet and went off to get things ready in the delivery room. I could have chopped him up in little pieces and boiled him in oil at that moment with the greatest delight. Afterwards I was told that they expected me to do some screaming, but screaming is not much in my line, and while the pain lasted I was forced to hold my breath and between times there was nothing to scream about.

I tried to groan, but apparently my attempts did not sound very convincing, for nobody got excited about them. I made up my mind that I was going to get some attention and without the humiliation of yelling either. Sitting up I took the glass of water that stood on the table by my bed and hurled it out the door. It hit the wall about three yards down the hall and

I surely did get some attention. A smashed glass makes plenty of noise in a hospital at midnight.

When the doctor wanted to know what I was hurling glasses for I tried to pretend that I was out of my head and didn't remember anything about it. As I had never seen a person who was out of his head I expect my representation rang false, anyway I know I didn't fool the doctor. However, I got what I wanted when he gave me something which made me go numb from the soles of my feet up. I could still move but there was no feeling of pain. I think it was the most wonderful feeling I have ever experienced.

As the numbness reached my neck I could still feel my fists going through the doubling up and thrusting process, and I wondered whether I had gone through the motions for so long that I was imagining that I was still doing them or whether pain I could not feel could still make me do them. I was concentrating on this problem when I dropped off to sleep.

When I came to I was in the delivery room. I now know that I had been there between three and four hours. I could move but I felt no pain. I could not see more than mere shadows, but my inability didn't worry me any. I put my mind on doing what the doctor said, and I remember thinking it queer that I was so obedient, for ordinarily I don't follow orders very well. I heard the doctor speak to my husband and I wondered how long I had been in the delivery room.

I don't think I was awake more than three or four minutes before the nurse gave me some morphine and I dropped off again.

The next time I came to I was being tucked into bed back in my room. I wanted to ask the nurses whether the child was a boy or a girl, but since they didn't say anything about the baby I feared that perhaps it hadn't lived and thought in that case it would be embarrassing to ask about it. After a while, however, a baby's wail was heard and one of the nurses said something about that being a husky boy I had.

I felt tired, more tired than I had ever been in my life. Nothing, I thought, could ever feel so good as it did to sprawl out between the cool sheets, my abdomen back to normal after its awkwardness during the last few months.

After talking to my husband I fell asleep, and when I awoke a few hours later I was able to read a little and scribble off a few notes. It was a week before I had any desire to do anything more.

My nurses refused to believe that I had not been conscious during practically all of the time. Apparently my doctor kept me in a state in which I did as I was told but from which I would not remember anything, and that, it seems to me, is the perfect state to be in on such occasions.

*Case 36*

*At a Philadelphia hospital.* My baby was born at 10 P.M. Labor pains began at about 4:30 that morning but were so faint that I couldn't be sure of their identity until noon when a slight bloody discharge made me decide to phone my regrets for a corn roast I had hoped to go to that afternoon.

By 7 P.M. I was in the hospital with my husband and aunt along to help time the pains which were still far from uncomfortable. By 9:30 the membrane had broken and the doctor was called. I had accomplished so little with the pains that he had to work over me until he felt the baby's head enter the cervix. Then I was taken into the delivery room and given a hypodermic of some drug that causes the uterus to dilate vigorously.

In about three minutes it began to take effect and I began to work. The nurse handed me the chloroform inhaler to use when the pain became too much for me. But my back ached as though it would break, so I put my hands under the small of my back and got great relief from that. Since my hands were not free to hold it, I wasn't able to use the chloroform inhaler.

I tried to relax, as I had been previously advised, and then push when the pains came, but I discovered that I was gasping for breath, possibly from the effects of the drug. My aunt was with me and I had her fan me the rest of the time I was in labor. That helped me a great deal.

Until this time I had felt almost apologetic for getting every one concerned away from their homes lest it should be a false alarm, but now that I felt real dilation pains I began to work in earnest, glad that I was not going to be sent home to wait around for a week or more.

I closed my eyes, kept my hands under my back, and pushed till I thought I would burst a blood vessel. When I felt the baby's head reach the opening of the vagina I got the queer idea that if I stopped to rest the head might be sucked back entirely into the canal, so I inhaled a quick mouthful of air and kept on pushing. The doctor said, "That's fine," followed by "She's got a lot of nerve"—this to the nurse. I was pleased to have such a compliment from my gruff old doctor and was determined that he shouldn't have reason to change his good opinion of me, so I began to work again. I had expected the push that expelled the head to be the hardest one, but the next for the shoulders seemed just as bad, and I thought, "I'll never have the courage to have another baby." I seemed to get relief from moaning as I pushed—a very low, dignified moan however! (My husband just outside the door said he was getting worried because he didn't hear a sound.) After the second big effort, I began to be impatient to have it over with, so I hurried things along as best I could,



and nine minutes after the hypodermic began to take effect I had borne a 7¾ lb. baby and felt immensely pleased with myself.

As soon as I was back in my room I thought, "Humph! that wasn't bad at all, and I hope I can have a large family."

### *Case 37*

*At a Boston hospital.* Both Fred and I wanted children and before we were married we had talked about three as an ideal number. We hoped for a year of companionship alone after marriage but were willing to let events take their course. I became pregnant eight months after we were married. During the second and third months I suffered from nausea in the mornings in spite of the prescription of my family doctor to whom I went during the second month. For the rest of my term up until about a week of my expected delivery I felt better than usual physically. I was happy about my work and looking forward with interest to my coming experience. During the last week as the discomfort of carrying the baby increased I used to lie awake in bed wondering how I should come through it. My concern was not for the child but for myself. I think this disturbance was largely due to the memory of my own mother's long illness and repeated operations due to the damage caused by an infection at the time of my birth. My baby also came ten days after it was expected, and that contributed to the strain of the last two weeks.

The evening before Edith was born I had gone to bed at eleven after entertaining some intimate friends in my home. I awoke at one o'clock in pain and still half asleep went into the toilet. A show of blood and the rapidity with which the pains were coming frightened me. I walked up and down the corridor. My pains were recurring at three minute intervals. Fred called the doctor who said they were preliminary pains and would die out. I felt as though I might have the baby any minute and was afraid I wouldn't get to the hospital in time. The pains continued and Fred called the doctor again. He said, "Bring her in."

The twelve-mile taxi ride to the hospital was unpleasant because of the bumpiness of the roads and my difficulty in sitting up straight. My pains continued to come regularly. We got there at three-thirty in the morning.

I was much relieved to be at the hospital. From that point on my training as a nurse began to be useful to me. I am sure that nursing experience would be helpful to any one about to become a mother. I knew what to expect and I tried to do exactly as I was told. I was booked. My history was taken, and it seemed so unnecessary then. It could have been done before. My temperature and pulse were recorded. My pains were coming so frequently that it was thought inadvisable to give me an enema. I was shaved and taken immediately to the delivery room. By that time

I was too busy to be frightened. I worked hard to try to help the baby get out. It felt as though I were trying to pass a large orange that just wouldn't move. The pain was not particularly severe; at least, I didn't notice it any more than I had at home when I could do nothing but wait. The process was tiring rather than painful. I wondered how long I could continue to help myself. I was sweating, and they opened the window for me although it was January. I continued to bear down but I didn't seem to be accomplishing anything.

At 6:30 my own doctor arrived. I felt a good deal better when I saw him. He was always cheerful and I had great confidence in his skill. He examined me and had me moved into a larger room. I remember being much surprised when he made me assume a side position as the cases I had observed had been delivered on their backs, and I had always pictured my own delivery in that way. I have always disliked to take ether, but when they gave me some on cotton batting I was glad to get it. Then they put the cone over my face and the last thing I remember was the house doctor holding my pulse.

(Forceps were used and I was torn so that five stitches were required. The baby's head was too long for me.)

My first recollection after the birth was of some one bothering me. I remember that my breasts pained me and they felt as though they were tightly bound. I heard some one say, "You've got a fine girl, Mrs. Woods." Then I dozed off again and when I next became conscious I was in bed. I began to shake and to tremble all over. The nurses piled on blankets and gave me hot water bottles fearing ether pneumonia. It was really nerves. I didn't need the blankets. I was very sore, but the odor bothered me more than the pain.

At half-past ten my nurse asked me if I wanted to see my baby. Up to that time I hadn't thought about the baby at all. I wondered if the nurse thought I didn't care about the baby nor want it because I had never inquired for it. When Edith was brought in I held her. She was a cute little baby. I was glad that she was so pretty, so healthy looking, and unmarked. Her tiny hands were beautiful. I remember thinking, "She is a girl, and she will have to go through this same experience." When my dinner was brought in I didn't want to let Edith go. After that I used to feel so glad that I had her. I wanted her in with me all of the time. I was pleased that I could nurse her even though a sore nipple gave me considerable pain.

On my twelfth day the doctor permitted me to go home. My mother came in to do my housework for a month after that although I was up and around in the house.

I have no regrets and no unpleasant memories to look back upon. I

would not be childless for the world. If I could afford to bring up three or four children properly I should like to have them. I intended to have another one before now, but when the time came that I was rested and we could afford it I found it impossible because of a dropped womb probably caused by my failure to rest as much as I should have done when I got home. However, I wanted the baby enough to undergo the minor operation that would make it possible, and I am looking forward to having a second, somewhat belated, child this year. I know it will be worth all that it costs.

*Case 38*

*At a New England city hospital.* Every detail of the birth of my first child stands out vividly in my mind. In the first place I was eager to have a baby, and though I was thirty felt *almost* sure that I would get through the ordeal safely. I did succumb to the feeling, common to expectant mothers, that I might not live, to the extent that I wrapped and labeled all Christmas gifts carefully, thinking I might not be there to give them to the recipients. My strongest feeling, however, was that both the baby and I would be perfectly healthy.

At breakfast I felt slight pains, and noticed that they were regular. But I didn't mention them to my sister until my husband had gone to work, as I knew he was very nervous and would be a hindrance rather than a help. I felt too, that it was not necessary for two to go through the ordeal. Ellen and I were excited to find the pains came every five minutes. I had been told to expect thirty-minute intervals at first, and supposed I would have time to make the beds, and put the house in order. While I was changing my clothes the pains came closer together; timing them we found the intervals were two minutes, then one and one-half. Then the water began to come in moderate gushes. I had pads prepared for such an emergency. I called the doctor, a taxi, and my sister-in-law who had agreed to go with me to the hospital. All the way to the hospital the pains increased in severity. Arrived at the hospital the nurses tried to help me up the stairs. I told them I could still navigate under my own sail, and went up the stairs so fast they had hard work to keep up with me. It was then 9 A.M. I figured, judging by the speed of the pains, the baby might be born in an hour. The sterilized doctor was a welcome sight and renewed my confidence. He ordered an enema. This hurt more than the pains. Then the pains began in earnest. Shaving the pelvic hair was rather torture. That over, I walked up and down the room, and grabbed hold of the foot of the delivery bed every time a pain came—every two minutes. The doctor, who was strong, put his hands on my hips every time I did this and let me push against him. "Well," he

said jovially, "the only trouble with this girl is that she isn't strong enough. Nearly takes me off my feet every time she pushes. What have you been doing, walking two miles every day?" I laughed and said: "Just about, and when it was too icy to walk on the streets, I paced the length of the piazza up to a mile."

"Well," he answered, "I never saw any one in this predicament laughing like this before. You think it's a picnic, don't you?"

"No, but wouldn't you rather see me laugh than cry?"

The pains began to be excruciating.

"Want to get on the table?"

"Yes."

Then a rending pain—the sensation of being actually torn limb from limb—forced the first shriek from my lips. "Go, Anna, no need for you to see this," I said to my sister-in-law. Another "thunder and lightning" pain. "Want some ether?" asked Dr. E. "Yes," I gasped.

I had enough to deaden the pain without causing loss of consciousness. For the next five hours I worked harder than I ever did in my life before or since, responding to the pains and pulling. A nurse held one hand, the doctor's wrist was my second point of leverage. Occasionally they gave me an extra whiff of ether and I lost consciousness long enough to get a little rest. The doctor said several times, "Over the top, this time." But the baby didn't come. I thought: "How much longer? Will it ever come?" And once I thought: "How did my mother ever go through this five times? I never could."

At last I felt something wet against my leg, something moving—the baby. I heard the doctor say, "Look at those shoulders. He'll be a football player." Then the nurse showed me the baby; I could just open my eyes enough to see a red, squirmy, indistinct thing. Pretty soon I asked: "Did you say it was a boy? Is he all right?"

"Come now, just one more, two more—here we are—the afterbirth—want to see it?"

"Yes."

It looked like a huge piece of liver hung over the doctor's gloved hand.

"That's fine. Now I've got to do a little dressmaking. You won't need any ether this time."

The stitches, it seemed, hurt worse than all the rest of it. Now that the baby was born (at 3:21 P.M.) I didn't have the courage to keep on standing pain. I had had seven hours of it.

Then they wrapped me up like a mummy, and left me. Soon two orderlies came and carried me to a room in which there were two other patients. My private room wasn't ready. Soon I ached terrifically all over; I had worked so hard every muscle was tense. My head throbbed with



pain so fiercely it seemed I could not get through the night. One nurse brought a cup of lukewarm cocoa. I said I couldn't turn over. She said roughly, "Of course you can. Turn over." I did with great effort. I told her I didn't want cocoa, it would make my head ache worse. I asked for malted milk. She said brusquely: "Drink that, or go without." I went without. I had never been in a hospital before. I didn't even know there was a bell near my bed to summon a nurse. Neither did I know that for a few dollars I could have a special nurse by the night, who would look out for my comfort. Finally the night nurse came in. Her face was so angelic I shall never forget her. She said quietly, while she took my pulse: "What can I get for you?" "A hot water bottle that's hot and some malted milk." The other nurse had brought me a lukewarm "hot" water bottle. She did right away. I was a little more comfortable, but did not sleep all night. The Cæsarean patient whose baby was born two hours after mine, was in the same room. When I was almost comfortable enough to doze her groaning kept me awake. I saw the red cross of the incision on her abdomen when the doctor examined her.

Next morning my son was brought in. His head was elongated and peaked, very queer looking, his nose seemed disproportionately large. I thought: "He isn't very handsome, he looks queer, but I'll love him just the same." I did not know that babies' heads are often queer-looking for a while because of being pushed out of shape in the birth process, but that this soon corrects itself. In a few days Junior's head was quite ordinary and he rapidly became a most attractive child.

### *Case 39*

*A contrast in attitudes.* Just as soon as our flat was settled my husband and I decided to have a baby.

From the very first moment I knew I was pregnant I felt like a disembodied spirit—my body did not seem my own. Something foreign and strange had been thrust upon it and it belonged to that thing. The baby seemed to be something outside of my consciousness—an objective thing—not a part of me. Whether or not that strange attitude of mind can carry over throughout life in a mother's attitude toward a child I do not know, but it is true that I have never felt *at one* with my first child. She has always remained an objective, external personality to me. This may be attributable to disposition, but whatever the cause of this feeling of unrelatedness, I heartily regret it.

I was quite elated over having a baby even if the world did become a strange place to me, and I did all that I could to find out what would produce a wonderful child. My knowledge was limited to *Old Wives' Tales*.

One thing (this I read in some book) was to walk six miles a day in order to insure easy delivery. This soon exhausted me and increased the stomach sickness from which I was never free during the whole nine months. In fact, I kept down just seven full meals during the period of pregnancy. I was so sick at one time I had to go to the hospital for complete rest.

I felt very important and self-conscious and very different from any one else in the world all during the pregnancy. I was very nervous and frightened, too. And I felt that my relatives were frightened for me. In fact they told me later that they never dreamed the baby would be born alive.

When I went to the hospital to have the baby I was "frightened to death." This was increased by the fact that my water "broke" the day before. I was sure that I was going to die, or that the baby would.

My husband went with me to the hospital and we stayed alone in a room all day and until midnight. He was more frightened than I and swore he would never see me suffer so again!

At my demands, the doctor (he was a town doctor—the hospital was quite small) came twice that day and assured me that everything was all right. But I was not assured. The moment he left me I went to pieces. I did not know him very well, having seen him just a few times and having felt bashful at those times.

I feel now that had I had some experienced mother with me I could have been quieted and reassured. But as the hours wore into midnight I grew frenzied and felt that if this foreign thing were not lifted from me I would go crazy. So the doctor decided to take the baby with instruments.

I awoke the next morning again feeling in a strange world, and when the baby was shown to me it did not seem like anything belonging to me at all.

But I was delighted with it and wore myself out nervously during my stay in the hospital wondering if the baby was safe in the ward and if it was warm and well fed. Once in the night when it was brought to me to nurse (I could only nurse it eight days) its feet and hands were so cold I wanted to make a scene and take it home at once where I would know that it was all right. It was a happy day when I left the hospital.

#### SECOND CHILD

Because of our finances my husband and I decided that we could not afford a second child. But we were quite happy when nature decided differently for us.

My feelings toward my second pregnancy were quite normal and balanced. This second child was something close to me, and it belonged to

the family group and the family was going to be the happier for its coming. I felt *at one* with this baby and the feeling has continued throughout its life. During pregnancy I used to go around with a comfortable feeling of having something companionable with me. But I was not self-conscious and oftentimes forgot all about my condition when the stomach sickness wore away after three months, though I never felt quite well. But I took things easy and kept rested.

I was determined to have my second child at home where I would know all that went on. So we had a dear old family doctor in whom I had confidence, who assured me that it would be a simple matter.

After a very few hours of labor the second child was born naturally. I experienced a thrill in the feeling that I had participated in its birth, and it gave me a feeling of being a real part of life. I had had a part in its miracles.

And I enjoyed the time I was in bed because the baby was right next me, warm, companionable, and happy.

I might add that the feelings of the young mother in Viña Delmar's book *Bad Girl* were exactly my own.

#### *Case 40*

*A mistake in reckoning.* I had always pictured myself as the mother of many children—after I should have done countless other things in the world—but in a quite separate compartment of my mind was an unthinkable horror of the birth experience.

Through adolescence I occasionally saw references in fiction and serious articles to the difficulties of women in childbirth, and noted the special tones of women when they mentioned it, but somewhere in my reading I also got the idea that the birth process, being a natural happening; should be as easy and joyous as any other great physical labor. I knew I was daydreaming when I thought I might have babies nonchalantly, for I had never excelled in anything physical, was narrow-hipped, and before marriage subject to dysmenorrhea.

Wanting to people the world with his children was an integral part of my love for the man I married, and side by side with this was the urge to prove my affection by doing something supremely difficult for him. In the second half-year of marriage I suggested that we have our first child now. It was quite a come-down to hear George say that if I could not be happy without children, all right, go ahead and have one, but it was kind of hard on him to have to make way for a rival so soon.

Shedding a few of my ideas of self-sacrifice, I insisted two years later, when I was twenty-seven, that we have a baby for my own personal gratification. Before George had quite given in, our unwittingly faulty

contraceptive technique helped me out. By this time I had become so curious as to what parturition was like, that I was eager for the whole experience. George changed his attitude completely, now, and I found that his fear of the ordeal of childbearing had been a large factor in his reluctance to see me become a mother.

In fact, it was harder to stand seeing his worry than it was to put up with what slight inconvenience pregnancy brought me. What troubles I had were increased by my ignorance. The third month, when I first suspected that I might be *enceinte*, I had intermittent nausea and great sleepiness. Supposing that these would both continue throughout "my time" and become worse, I tried to ignore them instead of doing anything for them. When, to my surprise, they disappeared in a few weeks I still supposed that I might at any moment become incapable of much activity so I kept trying to get the next year's work done up ahead of time. This gave me plenty of exercise but little time outdoors. In part because I was so busy my extra weight never did bother me much. When quickening occurred it frightened me, as I thought something was going wrong because I had just allowed myself the luxury of a temper outburst. After I had calmed down I realized that perhaps what I had felt was the child within me, and when this happened again two days later I was sure of it and very happy. In the seventh and eighth months I had some backaches at the end of the day when I would lie down to rest after being on my feet a good deal, standing still at such work as cooking the evening meal for our family, which now included my younger brother and semi-invalid father. The unborn child annoyed me by kicking while I was getting dinner ready at night, until I found that loosening the support I wore made these kicks less uncomfortable.

I supposed I would have to sit still most of the time in the ninth month, so I left all sewing for the baby to be done then. I also expected to worry some about the labor ahead of me, when I should come to that month.

At the end of the eighth month, after a week in which I had washed all the blankets besides doing the regular housework and laundry and some extra sewing for the house, had company and taken a two-hour walk, I got the week's washing done on Monday in time to catch the one o'clock bus in town by running the last half mile for it. I spent an hour in the dentist's chair having a forgotten tooth filled, did odds and ends of shopping, and was home in time to cook dinner and have it on the table by six. After doing the lunch and dinner dishes I mixed bread and cut out a flannel slip for "the baby" before going early to bed.

Waking at two o'clock, I looked into George's room to make sure that he had got safely home from his club without the car cracking up on him.



When I got back into bed I happened to start coughing for no reason at all; was too lazy to get a glass of water to stop it, and finally felt the faintest flash of pain for a split second, barely enough to be localized at the inner end of the vagina, then noticed what seemed to be water trickling out of me. I could not understand what was the matter, and hated to wake George, so I made myself comfortable in the room nearest his, and by four o'clock had got used to the phenomenon of having a little colorless, odorless fluid come out every time I moved, and was soon asleep again. When the alarm woke us at quarter of eight I remembered to tell George about my puzzling experience, and he had sense enough to telephone to my obstetrician, who said I was all right, but "might as well come in" to see him. I would not believe anything could be happening out of order to my baby, forgetting in my excitement that a premature delivery need not mean a still-born child and that we never had been sure when conception occurred, so I dressed and drank a glass of milk, picked up my handbag and hopped into the old Ford with George, certain that I would be back home in two or three hours. He was plenty worried, but I had got used to that, accepting it as one of the liabilities of my condition. So slowly and carefully did he drive that it took us an hour for a ride we usually made in forty minutes, and the last half of the way I was definitely aware of rhythmic contractions, coming every few minutes, that reminded me of the menstrual pains of early adolescence, though what I was now experiencing was mostly muscular sensation with very little pain.

At quarter of ten we reached the hospital and I was suddenly overcome with pity for myself when, in the midst of an undeniable pain, I was ordered by the young secretary to come across the waiting room to her desk. Furious that she would not come to me, since it seemed as if she must know my circumstances, I stalked over to her. Answering routine admission questions, I released my anger as I saw that I was but a cog in the machine this worker helped to keep running smoothly. I wondered why my doctor had not appeared, but the idea of seeing him for a moment and then going back home had been smothered by the happenings that were going on in me.

Going up in the elevator to the third floor, I had my only terrible misgiving. It just seemed unbearable not to have time to adjust myself to the fact that I was going up, one person, and I would come down, two persons. That thought, purely as a psychological problem, almost bowled me over. But in addition to that I knew myself already entered upon a physiological cataclysm from which there was now no drawing back. It was like that sickening feeling of having one's skis slip and start one down a terrifyingly steep hill before one is ready. Perhaps I never would have felt any more ready. I hated the thought that I now must go ahead with

whatever lay before me, whether I would or not. I might always choose to keep on going if it were in my power to choose, but to know that I was losing my power of choice, and could only submit to what might happen—that did upset me. (Only I must confess I had had a similar feeling the year before when my tonsils were to be taken out, under ether, so it may have been a revulsion against hospitalization.)

When George left me in my room, I surprised myself by crying as I said good-by, only because it seemed as if the last bridge to my normal life was gone. I had not expected or wanted him to stay. He had to hurry to work, as he was already late, and of course I knew it would be harder on him than on me, and that I never could stand seeing him agonize over my experience.

Having somehow accepted what was happening to me in those two brief moments of intense feeling, though at the time I thought I was rebelling against it instead of accepting it, I now became an interested spectator at my own drama. Nothing very spectacular or dramatic as yet, but enough doing to keep me from mulling over futures. The nurse was crisp, businesslike, a machine, and I tried not to stand in the way of her doing her work to her own satisfaction. It was pleasant to have no purpose in life but to obey an authoritative being who knew what she was about.

Having put me neatly to bed, she said I might get up and walk around between pains, but I had only time to do one or two turns about the room, and then, after a brief interval of nausea, the pains were coming so close together that I could feel the next one starting before the last had more than died away. The certainty of their rhythm impressed me. Starting low, they waxed strong like a musical crescendo, then as surely took themselves off. A house doctor, a woman, came in and poked me, then commented to the nurse with her, "The head is down, but not well in." Meaning nothing at the time, these words were spoken as if they were important, so I stored them up, to find out later what they were about.

Sometime about eleven o'clock, I should guess, the pains became too intense to be interesting, and I discovered that a deep bass moan—or mild bellow—relieved my feelings at the height of each one. At 11:15 I was taken to the delivery room, to my satisfaction, as I was then not left alone to feel that things were standing still. The woman interne was here, and a number of nurses—probably two, but I was not particularly noticing. Again I enjoyed my pains, this time physically because I could feel myself stretching unused muscles, and it gave me a feeling of accomplishment much as the first skate of the winter does, or the sawing or chopping of wood when done rarely for a lark or in emergency. The pains were tremendous and I also hated them and bellowed in a great

deep voice I had never heard before through the worst part of each one. Yet the sensation of pushing was a satisfying one, I was under such an enormous impulsion to do it whenever a pain got well under way.

"The head is out," said somebody, and I replied, "That's good." Now I found that if I made a lot of fuss with each pain I got a whiff of ether, so I made a great to-do whenever a pain started. Between whiffs I heard somebody say, "Dr. Armstrong is here." "Glad to see you," wisecracked I before he came in my range of vision, and wondered why nobody laughed. He explained that he had been held out in the country on another case, and did not start in until they were sure I was coming right along. Now that he was on hand I felt no more responsibility in the case, and greedily breathed in the ether. At 12:17 the baby was officially "born," and at half-past twelve I was back in my room, laughing at George's red face and his boast that he had already seen the baby, "six pounds and perfect, in her box in a warming closet." In fifteen minutes he had to go back to work—minus lunch, I learned afterwards—and I went to sleep. For supper I ate lettuce and drank milk, considered that I felt well enough to get up and cook supper for the home folks, as I had heard of peasant women doing, then slept until my father came in at eight. I was angry at him for waking me up, and in ten minutes was asleep again. At ten the baby came in to make believe nurse, and I sure did like what I saw of her. Deciding that I would like to have a baby every week until I had as many as I could afford, I went right to sleep again.

Five years later we did get enough money scraped together so that George had to admit we could afford another baby. I somewhat dreaded this one as I was spending my time in office work and hiring the housework done, so that I got almost no regular exercise. When the time came I had dilation and contractions, without pain, for two days, off and on, then about five minutes of recognizable pains at short intervals, which I reported to the intern as emphatically as I could, but without impressing him. One big expulsive, rending pain made me bellow. This brought a nurse running, just in time to hold back the baby's head until the doctor could be called. As I was lying on my side the baby would have shot out over the edge of the bed, if I had not yelled.

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## CHAPTER XXVI

### ABORTED PREGNANCY AND INFERTILITY

**Interrupted pregnancy.** Any one familiar with the breeding of animals knows that the impregnated female does not always successfully bring forth offspring. In some cases the reason for this is apparent because there has been some sort of accident that seems sufficient cause, while in other instances the occurrence is unexplainable, or when it repeatedly happens to a particular animal seems to be a physiological idiosyncrasy of the individual female. The situation is similar among humans, so far as the accidental interruption of pregnancy is concerned. Among women, however, there are two other causes for the failure of pregnancy to go on to its normal end, and these are more common than the others. One is the artificial ending of the pregnancy by the physician for therapeutic reasons, and the other is the same type of interference because of the unwillingness of the woman to give birth to the child.

In popular thought the term *abortion* signifies this last form of interrupted pregnancy and is always regarded as a criminal act. In the medical vocabulary, for the sake of clarity, various forms of interrupted pregnancy are distinguished. If the fœtus is expelled from the mother's body without any outside aid, it is called a spontaneous abortion. When the abortion results from something that has been purposely done by the mother or by somebody else, it is induced. If the expulsion is the act of the physician for the purpose of saving the woman's life, it is a therapeutic abortion. This is a legal act and is generally held to be the moral thing to do. The exception to this is the ethical judgment of the Roman Catholic Church which believes such an interference with life under any circumstances to be immoral and contrary to Christian teachings. It is held that life starts with conception and that the new life has equal rights with the life of the mother and that to cause the fœtus to be expelled for any cause would be murder. Even if it be the opinion of the physician that unless the fœtus is removed both mother and child will die, and that if it is removed the mother will live, this does not justify interference.

The teaching of this church is summarized in its declaration that it is never permitted to bring about an abortion directly.<sup>1</sup>

There are Protestants who individually agree with the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, but usually within the non-Catholic groups therapeutic abortion is considered a medical problem, and whether such an artificial ending of pregnancy should or should not be carried out is left to the decision of the responsible and competent physician.

The artificial ending of pregnancy merely that the mother may escape the birth of the child, whatever the method used and whether it is the act of the mother, of a friend, or of a doctor, is known as criminal or illegal abortion. At the present time Russia is the only country that gives the mother legal permission to decide for herself whether she will interrupt her pregnancy or carry the child to term.

In medical language three other distinctions are recognized in interrupted pregnancies, according to the length of time that has elapsed since conception. The word abortion strictly used refers to the expulsion of the fœtus during the first sixteen weeks, miscarriage if the event occurs between the sixteenth and twenty-eighth weeks, and premature birth if it happens after the twenty-eighth week. In this third period if the child is born dead, it is called a stillbirth. If he lives he is a premature baby.

**Causes of spontaneous interruption.** There are various causes of spontaneous interruption of pregnancy. The following are the most common. (1) There may be an inherent fault in the embryo so that the pregnancy does not go forward normally, or so that the child dies. In the latter case the mother's body usually expels the dead fœtus in a few hours or days. Sometimes this does not happen and the dead fœtus has to be removed by the surgeon. Sometimes a condition of the uterus, particularly the inflammation of its lining, leads to an aborted pregnancy. The chief cause of abortion, using the term in its stricter sense, is syphilis. Serious shocks or physical accidents may interrupt a pregnancy. Although the fœtus is splendidly protected and not affected by ordinary injuries the mother receives, a fall or a blow may lead to serious consequences, and especially is there risk of pre-

<sup>1</sup> See E. R. Moore, *The Case Against Birth Control*, pp. 47-51, and W. B. Gossett, *What the Public Should Know About Children*, Chapter 11, "Moral Problems Pertaining to Obstetrical and Surgical Practice in Catholic Hospitals."

mature birth if the accident occurs in the latter months of pregnancy. Terrific emotional experiences, notably grief, anger, and fear, have occasionally been the apparent cause of an aborted pregnancy.

(2) Coitus also is credited with an occasional interrupted pregnancy. Some physicians rule out intercourse throughout the period of pregnancy, but it is more common to advise that it be carried on in a lateral position after the early months, to avoid harmful pressure; and to forbid it after the seventh month and during the period of each month when under usual circumstances menstruation would occur. There is a possibility of injury or even of infection if coitus occurs during the last two months of pregnancy. The great risk is that the child will be prematurely born. The question of policy regarding coitus during pregnancy should be brought to the attention of the physician, and his decision should be faithfully followed by husband and wife.

(3) The record of miscarriages or abortions which is the experience of some women demonstrates that in their cases there is a body habit which tends toward inability to carry the foetus to its normal outcome. It may be that at least a part of these women have an hereditary predisposition toward aborting.

**Induced interruption.** The therapeutic abortion, performed by a competent surgeon under proper hospital conditions, is similar in its significance to any other operation. It ranges in seriousness according to the age of the foetus, the condition of the woman, and the condition of the foetus. It may represent little or no risk, or, under untoward circumstances, such as when the foetus has been dead for some time, or when the woman is seriously ill, it may be a serious operation requiring the best possible skill of a specialist.

**Criminal abortion.** The criminal abortion is always dangerous, and its risk also ranges according to circumstances. Ordinarily the doctor undertaking such an operation lacks skill or is a physician of ill repute who formerly had a reputation as a skillful surgeon but who for some reason has lost it and has clung to illicit surgery. Since the illegal abortion is nearly always performed without proper hospital conditions and most frequently even without assistance, because of the necessity of avoiding witnesses, the risk of infection is great. Moreover there is rarely suitable after-care, since the doctor desires to be rid of his patient as soon as possible. Even when there is not risk of death, the operation may be responsible for later chronic ill

health, the inability to bear children, and conditions that increase the risk of cancer and of venereal infection.

**The facts a layman needs to know.** The likelihood of an interrupted pregnancy is apt to be greatest during the period of the month when menstruation would naturally occur. At this time the woman needs to be particularly careful to avoid strenuous exercise or any condition that might start miscarriage or premature delivery. This is not a universal fact, for some women have no special hazard either at this time or at any other. They are well protected from spontaneous interruption of pregnancy. It is good judgment to assume that care is necessary, and the doctor will insist upon restraint during the anniversary of the monthly period, and when from previous experience it is known that there is especial liability he will require the patient to lie down considerably or even to remain in bed for the three or four critical days.

Even the spontaneous abortion is dangerous, its risk varying with conditions and with the length of time the woman has been pregnant. It generally can be said that the interrupted pregnancy is a more serious matter than normal childbirth. It is important that this be known since husbands and wives through ignorance often allow the woman who has had a hemorrhage and has lost her fœtus to run risks that would not be assumed if it were understood that she needs attention and care equal to that which is taken for granted after she has given birth to a child.

#### *Case 41*

L. G. was determined to have a child, but although several conceptions occurred, each time the pregnancy came after two or three months to a spontaneous end. Her health suffered from the repeated ordeal, but she persisted in her determination to have a child. Removing from a small village in the rural section of a New England state to the city of Boston, she sought a leading specialist when once again she found herself pregnant, and religiously followed his counsel. Each month she spent a week in bed, and during the rest of the time she was careful, restraining her impulse to do as usual in her work and recreation. After nine months of this program she delivered a healthy child, without any complication, and two years later for a second time became a mother. There is every reason to suppose that had she continued living where she could not procure the services of a specialist she would never have given birth to a child.



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**The abortion problem.** No one knows how many abortions of an illegal sort are performed in the United States yearly. Great care is taken everywhere to guard the therapeutic abortion in the effort to prevent its misuse. The policy of a reputable hospital is such that this operation cannot be easily concealed. It is a practice in the state of North Carolina for a doctor to refuse to perform therapeutic abortion without a consultation with other physicians, so that there cannot be any doubt as to his motive or as to the need of the operation.

Since women who know that they have run risk of pregnancy under circumstances that would make it disastrous to them to have a child sometimes become panic-stricken at the delay of menstruation, which may be caused by their nervous condition, they become the prey for professional abortionists who without question in countless cases perform an operation when there has been no conception. Estimation has been made of the number of abortions that are illegally performed in this country each year. In the nature of the case there can be no reliable data, but the opinion of the men close to the situation reveals at least how serious a problem illegal abortion is. W. J. Robinson believes that the number of abortions artificially induced is a million per year. Max Hirsch estimates the number to be two million, while J. W. Williams at Johns Hopkins University places the number at half a million. Professor East regards these as excessive statements and says that since fairly accurate investigations of the number in England and Germany would lead to the belief that there are about three per thousand of the population, the amount in the United States would be at least not greater than this. Dr. East believes that abortion is decreasing wherever knowledge of contraception is becoming common.<sup>2</sup>

In the Davis study, in answer to the question, whether they had ever had artificial abortion performed, ninety-three women, or 9.3 per cent of the group, answered in the affirmative. Sixty-three had had one artificial abortion, nineteen had had two, six had had three, two had had four, one had had five, one had had seven, and one had had eight. In some of these cases the purpose was therapeutic but in the greater number the abortion was used to get rid of an undesired pregnancy which had resulted from ignorance of contraception or from the failure of the methods of birth control that were used.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> E. M. East, *Mankind at the Cross Roads*, pp. 262-263.

<sup>3</sup> Katharine B. Davis, *Factors in the Sex Life of Twenty-two Hundred Women*, pp. 20-21.

Dickinson and Beam, reporting on 184 fertile couples, found 114 abortions, or 30 per cent of the total of 384 pregnancies. It is their opinion that these were spontaneous or accidental rather than induced.<sup>4</sup> Hamilton, in his study, asked 81 women, "Have you ever had an abortion performed and if so, how many times?" Fifty-eight said "No." Two had sought to relieve themselves of a possible pregnancy by taking medicine. Twelve had had one abortion; one had had one and possibly two; six had had two; one had had three; and one had had many abortions. Hamilton also asked why these abortions were performed and by whom. He summarizes his findings as follows: Twenty-one of the hundred women had had abortions performed and two more had taken drugs for the purpose of starting up menstruation when they thought they might be pregnant. Sixteen of the women had had abortions for reasons that were not legal in the United States. Nineteen of the abortions had been performed by physicians.<sup>5</sup>

**Infertility.** There are families who face the task, once conception has taken place, of bringing the pregnancy to a successful issue in spite of the woman's tendency to miscarry, but there are other families who encounter different and more difficult problems. With them the question is, Can conception take place? The husband or wife may be an individual of low fertility or even absolute sterility, or either of these conditions may be true of both of them. Science is better prepared to help couples if only one of them has low fertility than it is to help those couples both of whom are relatively infertile, but it is not helpless in all cases of low fertility of both marriage partners. It has no means of restoring normal reproductive power to the absolutely sterile individual.

Every one realizes the prevalence of childlessness among Americans. There is also a large number of families that have but one child. It is generally assumed that in no-child or one-child families, this is the deliberate intent of the couple and that the childlessness should be charged to birth control practices. On the contrary, any one who has a frank acquaintanceship with families having no children or having only one knows that many of these regret their situation and that the problem they face is minimum fertility or the absolute incapacity to have children. In numerous cases it is true that these couples in

<sup>4</sup> R. L. Dickinson and Lura Beam, *A Thousand Marriages*, pp. 249-50.

<sup>5</sup> G. V. Hamilton, *A Research in Marriage*, pp. 133-134.

the earlier period of marriage practiced some sort of birth control, looking forward to parenthood just as soon as economic circumstances justified, in their opinion, the coming of children. When, however, they sought the conception, to their surprise and disappointment their expectation did not work out. In some of these cases it is an open question whether conception could have taken place at an earlier period. This does not mean that the birth control practice caused infertility but that in their more youthful years the couple might have had a higher fertility. In other instances investigation shows absolute sterility and the probability is that this has been true from the beginning of marriage.

There are doubtless numerous couples who have no desire to have children, and the discovery of sterility is for them nothing but relief. This is not true of the majority of American young people. However much they may desire to postpone pregnancy, they recoil at the idea of infertility. If this were not true a larger percentage of men would seek an absolute security against unwanted children by becoming sterilized, an operation which for them is neither difficult nor painful. As a matter of fact, any one who has confidential contact with family problems knows that there are few events that test domestic loyalty more than the discovery by husband or wife that the other is sterile.

#### *Case 42*

Mrs. B., a college graduate who had married a business man in her home town, finding herself childless after several years of marriage, determined to know the reason. She went to a competent physician who, after examining her, rendered the judgment that there was nothing to suggest that she was lacking in fertility and that the probability was that it was her husband who was sterile. She was so insistent that she forced him also to accept an examination, with the result that it was positively known that he was absolutely sterile and had been so throughout the marriage period. His predicament appeared to be the result of his failure to secure competent medical treatment when he had been infected with gonorrhea some years before his marriage.

Mrs. B. faced her problem squarely but not without strong emotional protest. She came for a conference, wishing approval of the solution which she had worked out. She felt morally justified in seeking an alliance which would permit her to become a mother and insisted that her husband had no right to object, and that if he did she would get a divorce, which she realized would be highly disadvantageous for him in his business. The difficulties of her solution were pointed out and she came to see that her

motive was primarily a desire to inflict punishment upon her husband against whom she felt deep grievance. She admitted that he was kind and loyal and as disappointed as herself, and that, had parenthood been possible, there would have been no doubt of her happiness. She also came to recognize that her program was sure to alienate the affection of her husband and destroy his confidence even though for financial reasons he might be reluctant to separate from her.

It was suggested that the better way for her to solve her problem would be to adopt a child. This ought to become a uniting influence for husband and wife rather than one that would separate them. She was assured that after a little while she would find herself reconciled to the mothering of a child some other woman had brought into the world. She had thought of this solution but had dismissed it, feeling that one could not have the same love for a child not one's own as for a product of one's own flesh and blood. She was assured that this was not true, that it had been proved false in countless cases, and that there was no biological instinct among humans that led a man and woman to love only a child they had themselves brought into the world. She was persuaded at least to make an honest try at adoption and to win the consent of her husband to this. She found him more than ready to coöperate, and after considerable searching a healthy, promising child was found and adopted. In a very little time her affection was fixed upon the infant, and when the latter had reached the age of two years, the couple sought another child, which also was soon legally adopted.

The husband has prospered and is highly respected in the community, and the family at the present time is far more united and happy than it was even in the first years of marriage before its misfortune was discovered. No one would suspect that the children were adopted. The wife's attitude toward the husband has turned from indignation to sympathy, for she realizes that he was mostly the victim of the prevailing ignorance of his neighborhood and that his deficiency was undreamed of by him at the time of his marriage. It is doubtful, however, if Mrs. B. had not been an intelligent and resourceful person, fundamentally just, whether divorce would not have proved inevitable. It is certain that had she followed out her first decision, the break between husband and wife would have been immediate and probably irrevocable. Concealment would have been impossible, as she herself recognized, because the finding of the specialist was so positive that the husband could never have entertained the idea that he had suddenly become fertile. If he had been reëxamined, as would have been perhaps his first impulse, again it would have been found that he was sterile.



## 430 ABORTED PREGNANCY AND INFERTILITY

It has been estimated that at the present time in the United States about one marriage in ten is infertile. Indeed this is probably the proportion among modern civilized persons everywhere.<sup>6</sup> Carr-Saunders believes that so far as male sterility due to inborn conditions is concerned, there has not been any important variation from one epoch to another.<sup>7</sup> In other words, it is his opinion that whatever increase of male sterility has occurred in modern civilization is the result of venereal disease, particularly of gonorrhea.

Lack of children in a family that wants them is so serious a matter that it is unfortunate that so many couples, disappointed year after year because pregnancy does not occur, make no effort to discover the reason for their disappointment. There appears to be a surprising lack of knowledge of the possibilities and advantages of a scientific investigation of the causes of infertility. Even when absolute sterility exists, it is better to know this than to go on year after year hoping to no avail. In many cases neither husband nor wife is completely sterile but one or both may be lacking in fertility or may have conditions that can be remedied, which are preventing conception. Elsewhere I speak of the scientist who confessed that the greatest disappointment of his life was the fact that his wife had never conceived, but who, when asked what he had done about the matter, admitted that he had never sought the counsel of a specialist.<sup>8</sup> If a man nationally known in science fails to appreciate the need of discovering the facts regarding his own childlessness, it is not strange that the average husband and wife, when confronted with apparent infertility, drift through the years with a groundless fatality.

**The complexity of human sterility.** In many cases the explanation for a definite sterility is simple and definite. For example, the male may have a medical history of gonorrhea which explains his sterility, or the female may prove upon examination to have such excessive acidity of the vagina or such a tipped position of the uterus that there can be little doubt as to why she does not conceive until her condition is recognized and corrected.

In many cases the situation is very different. There may be no clear causal explanation of the difficulty. A long list of explanations for these more complex and vague cases of infertility could be drawn

<sup>6</sup> Paul Popenoe, *Conservation of the Family*, p. 95.

<sup>7</sup> A. M. Carr-Saunders, *The Population Problem*, p. 89.

<sup>8</sup> E. R. and G. H. Groves, *Sex in Marriage*, p. 197.

up, but they would represent mere opinion, dogma, or personal prejudices. The over-eating of meat, too much excitement, violent exercise, wearing a corset, too much indoor life, are some of the explanations that have been made. Civilization itself has been held responsible, with the assumption that modern man is more infertile than his primitive ancestors. It may be true that the habits and living conditions made possible by modern civilization, as practiced by definite individuals, may lessen their fertility, but civilization itself cannot be charged with an increase of sterility, since the facts lead toward the opposite conclusion. It is generally held by scientists that primitive people are less highly sexed and less fertile than modern men and women.<sup>9</sup>

It is reasonable to suppose that fertility is influenced by general physical conditions so that good health increases it and chronic ill health decreases it, but when it comes to the individual, it is not safe to assume that fecundity varies with physical vitality. In their study, Dickinson and Beam did not find poor health or poor nervous balance necessarily or in themselves deterrent to fertility.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand they did find slight evidence of a difference between happiness and unhappiness as influencing fertility. The outstanding conclusion from their study is, however, that imperfect sexual adjustment is a deterrent to fertility. In interpreting this one must keep in mind that these failures to achieve happy sex adjustment may themselves be extremely complex and conditioned by physiological as well as social influences.

We know from animal breeding that excessive fat lessens fertility and is often associated with absolute sterility. The fat bears testimony to a metabolic situation that is detrimental to the organism and presumably adverse to fertility. This is also true regarding humans. We have long known that cretins and those suffering from the allied conditions of myxedema, associated with deficiency of the secretion of the thyroid gland, are not only generally infertile but also infantile in sex structure.<sup>11</sup>

With the advance of medical science in endocrinology, it has been discovered that the cretin is but one illustration of the significance of

<sup>9</sup> A. M. Carr-Saunders, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-103.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 265.

<sup>11</sup> A. F. Tredgold, *Mental Deficiency*, p. 286, and S. W. Bandler, *The Endocrines*, pp. 59, 100-101.

the endocrine glands as influences operating upon sex and upon fertility. This new knowledge has been used not only for better diagnosis of individual cases of sterility, it has also brought forth new therapeutic measures for the treatment of curable cases of infertility.<sup>12</sup> It is, of course, useless to attempt to diagnose any particular case merely by relating it to a general trend.

**Causes of sterility in the male.** Usually when there is suspicion of sterility it is the wife who is first examined, because it is taken for granted that she is at fault. Authorities, however, estimate that at least a third of the cases of sterility are explainable by the condition of the male. Since the examination of the man is simpler and more certain than that of the woman, it is suggested that the common procedure be reversed and in case of doubtful fertility the male should be the first to be examined.

Many reasons are given for the male's diminished fertility or complete sterility, but it is universally believed that the chief cause is gonorrhea. It is conservatively estimated that one half of all cases of sterility result from this disease, and the proportion of cases of the male would not be less.<sup>13</sup> Gonorrhea is a local infection but one that easily spreads, and when it does not receive immediate and competent treatment may lead to inflammation that eventually destroys the power of reproduction. Other causes held responsible for sterility are mumps contracted after puberty (concerning this there are differences of opinion), damage resulting from frequent contact with X-ray, and mechanical injury. In addition to the problem of complete sterility we have cases of diminished fertility, frequently due to changes of the prostate gland, not uncommon in men after forty, mechanical injury, various forms of inflammation and congestion. There are also many assumed causes of diminished fertility ranging from diet to continual erotic stimulation, but these assertions usually represent opinion rather than knowledge.<sup>14</sup>

**Sterility in the female.** Sterility of the female is a more complex problem than that of the male. In many cases, however, diagnosis is not difficult or uncertain. Gonorrhea which has caused inflammation of the Fallopian tubes or of the ovaries is the most frequent cause. Fibroid tumors are another explanation of female steril-

<sup>12</sup> S. W. Bandler, *The Endocrines*, Chap. 9.

<sup>13</sup> M. J. Rosenau, *Preventive Medicine and Hygiene*, p. 68.

<sup>14</sup> Paul Popenoe, *Problems of Human Reproduction*, p. 106.

ity of which diagnosis is not uncertain. The uterus may be bent over in such a way as to make it difficult for the spermatozoa to enter, thus preventing conception. In some cases the female has retained an infantile reproductive system.

The important fact for the layman to keep in mind is that although the woman may be absolutely sterile so long as the deleterious condition persists, treatment at the hands of a skilled specialist may in many cases restore fertility. Everything depends upon the cause of the trouble, and this of course requires examination by the specialist.

#### *Case 43*

Mrs. L. T. is a happy mother, but she has had only one child. He was born after she had been married ten years. She had been pronounced sterile by her doctor and had given up all hope of ever having a child. Needing treatment, she went during her fortieth year to a gynecologist who not only confirmed her sterility but diagnosed the trouble as excessive acidity of the vagina. She was given treatment for this condition, and one day while being examined her condition was found to be favorable to conception. She was informed of the fact and passed the information on to her husband. As a consequence of this a few weeks later it was discovered that she had conceived. Her pregnancy moved on normally and she was at the end of her term delivered of a healthy son. Although she wished other children, never again did she become pregnant nor, so far as was discovered, did favorable conditions—at that time medical science was more powerless than at present—for conception again develop.

Milder cases of chronic excessive acidity of the vagina can often be handled successfully by the layman, either by having the woman douche with an alkaline solution of two heaping tablespoonfuls bicarbonate of soda to two quarts of warm water, just before coitus, or by taking dietary measures to reduce her systemic acidity, or by following both these procedures.

The idea is still prevalent among the laity and surprisingly common among college men that a woman who does not experience in coitus a pleasurable climax at the end, which is known as the orgasm, will not conceive. That this is false is the unanimous opinion of medical authorities. There are differences of judgment as to whether or not the experience of an orgasm encourages conception or has no influence whatever. The fact that artificial dissemination is possible and has been practiced to impregnate the human female removes all doubt



as to whether the woman can be made pregnant even though she does not have an orgasm.<sup>15</sup> Hamilton concludes from his study that orgasm does not favor pregnancy.<sup>16</sup> Dickinson and Beam, on the other hand, found from their data that imperfect sexual adjustment acts as a positive deterrent to fertility and that for most women the absence of an orgasm means an unsatisfying relationship. It is the opinion of W. J. Robinson and others that the orgasm favors conception, and he gives in detail the reasons for his judgment.<sup>17</sup>

**Leucorrhea.** It is unfortunate that women are so commonly familiar with vaginal discharge that they are apt to overlook this first symptom of gonorrheal infection. The most frequent affliction is leucorrhea, popularly called *the whites*. This is a catarrhal discharge having various causes. Although it does not affect the sex partner as is true of gonorrhea, it does need the care of a physician, for it bears testimony to conditions that ought not to be neglected. Unfortunately, in some cases gonorrheal infection may be unrecognized merely because it is interpreted as leucorrhea. In many cases the increase of the discharge and the change in its color and odor after gonorrheal infection are so great that even the woman who is accustomed to a copious leucorrhea will not fail to notice the change. In other cases it is assumed that the discharge is due to leucorrhea and as a consequence the gonorrheal infection is permitted to become chronic and serious. Whenever there is the slightest change in the character of the discharge, the woman should not rest until several microscopic tests have been made and the facts ascertained. False ideas of loyalty and shame should not keep a woman from finding out the facts, since neglect or delay may mean not only complete sterility but serious ill health. Aside from cancer and fibroid tumor, it is estimated that sixty per cent of all operations on the female genital tract are the consequences of untreated gonorrheal infection.<sup>18</sup> Rosenau's estimation is seventy-five to eighty per cent.<sup>19</sup>

**Adopting a child.** In cases where there can be no doubt that one or both of the marriage partners are sterile, or that for reasons of health conception must not take place, it will add to happiness and

<sup>15</sup> Paul Popenoe, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

<sup>16</sup> G. V. Hamilton, *op. cit.*, pp. 199-200.

<sup>17</sup> W. J. Robinson, *Woman*, Chap. 41.

<sup>18</sup> E. R. Groves, *Social Problems and Education*, p. 263.

<sup>19</sup> M. J. Rosenau, *Preventive Medicine and Hygiene*, p. 68.

lead to the establishment of complete family life if a child is adopted. Many couples make the grave mistake of waiting too long to do this, thinking that a child may be born, even though they have the clear statement of a specialist that this will not happen, or they do not seek any information and merely hope for the best. This means that when they do finally take the foster child they are likely to be too old to get from the experience full benefit or to do justly by the child. There need never be the fear that affection will not develop toward an adopted child or be reciprocated. In the rare cases in which a child is later born to a couple after they have adopted one, both children are integral members of the family and accepted as such. The important thing is to find a child of known and good heredity and without physical defect or weakness which is likely to prevent normal growth and strong physique.

The best place to seek a child is in a well-managed child-placing society which handles its cases with the care we rightly expect of a modern institution. These are at present administered by church organizations or by private philanthropy, or, in the more progressive states, by public agencies. It is desirable that the child be legally adopted, but not necessarily at the start. Indeed, the institution which furnishes the child will often not wish an immediate adoption, recognizing that for some reason it may prove a mistake for that particular family to have a child or to take a particular child.

It is dangerous to bring the child up without knowledge of his adoption, and the information should be given as early as it can be apprehended. Dr. Healy and others have found that any doubt in the child's mind concerning his parentage may lead to emotional conflict and finally to some form of delinquency.<sup>20</sup>

#### *Case 44*

S. M. has been married 5½ years. She was 24 years of age at marriage. Although she and her husband have had a serious problem, they feel that they have met it with success. She had been acquainted with the man she married three months but had known him by reputation for about a year. They had frankly talked together about problems they expected to meet in marriage, but although they had discussed children they had not talked about sex.

Their problem arose immediately at marriage. They were confronted by a sexual difficulty caused by partial disability apparently due to the

<sup>20</sup> William Healy, *Individual Delinquency*, p. 366.

husband's having had mumps when in his twenties. After they had been married a year and the wife did not become pregnant, she was examined by a doctor and submitted to an operation which it has finally appeared was not necessary. She went through with this in order to make more favorable conditions for conception. Three years went by and she did not become pregnant. Then the husband was examined and it was found that he was practically sterile. He is now under the care of a specialist who thinks that in time he may become more fertile, for he is not absolutely sterile. In these words she expresses the seriousness of their problem, which so far they have been able to meet without loss of affection:

"It is a terrible thing to encounter such a problem as we did immediately upon marrying, for no matter how much you love your mate your instincts affect your nerves, and going months without sexual satisfaction definitely affects your attitude toward your mate. We are working out our problem by adopting a child, which we feel will help us compensate for our loss."

#### *Case 45*

Until I was thirty-five, I felt no desire to have children. Rather, I was decidedly averse to having any and felt that abortion or suicide would be my reaction to a pregnancy. My distaste for childbearing was probably a part of my inability to accept the fact that I was a woman. I recall childhood and adolescent wishes to be a boy instead of a girl, believing that only men had lives worth living. In college years I became an ardent advocate of the kind of feminism that refuses to admit any differences between men and women. I was determined to remain unmarried, never to have children and to achieve economic independence and personal freedom—as though the last were ever possible!

My parents were unhappy in marriage and were divorced when I was about 14 years old. The picture of marriage I got from them was badly distorted. My early notion of sex relationships was that men forced women to submit to their demands and made them unwillingly bear children. My impression of childbirth was of something always unwelcome, painful and horrible. I did not see that women could find any pleasure or satisfaction in marriage, only trouble, children and restriction of their liberty.

Due to my mother's antagonism to my father I was afforded no opportunity for an affectionate or companionable relationship with him, which is essential for a girl child's normal psychosexual development or at least very important for it. I had an impression that my mother had not wanted a second child (myself), that she would have been quite happy had only my brother lived and I never had been born. I remembered all the times

when she punished or reproved or criticized me, and not the times when she showed me affection. I wished I had never been born. I rebelled against my mother's authority, carrying over into adolescence and early adult years a rebellion against all other forms of authority. I longed for freedom from her restrictions and from all restrictions. Certainly I wouldn't take a chance on marrying and having children, with all the restrictions they would impose.

At the age of twenty, as a student of biology and sociology, I learned that women as well as men had sexual emotions, which I had previously believed characteristic of men only. Soon after that I became aware of sexual desires within myself. But my determination to be independent was not relaxed. I might be attracted to men, but I would not permit myself to be trapped into marriage by my sexual needs, I told myself. I went on from college to graduate work and entered a profession. But after some years, I realized that work alone was not satisfying, that the professional life was a lonely one, and that no one could have personal freedom in any case, since there were always our own emotional complexes and social restrictions, from neither of which could we escape. I then began to see marriage in terms of companionship as well as sex expression. At the age of thirty I married, having found a man who was willing for me to go on with my work and who agreed with my opinion that children were undesirable.

For the last ten years, my work has been in a clinic for children. Many of our cases are those needing treatment for personality and behavior problems. To provide such treatment necessitates constant effort to gain better understanding of the emotional conflicts and defense mechanisms underlying them, and means continual reading and study in the fields of child psychology, psychoanalysis, etc. It is particularly important for the professional worker in the clinical job to understand her own emotional reactions and mental mechanisms. Thus the knowledge I acquired from study and reading was applied not only to the children in the clinic but to myself. Sometimes I understood some emotional conflict or defense mechanism in myself first and later in the children; sometimes I first understood these in the children and only later saw similar forces at work in myself. Our clinical studies also took us far into an analysis of parent-child relationships, and gave me new understanding of what my own childhood experiences had done to me in shaping my attitudes toward life and toward myself.

With each fresh access of insight about myself, came a gradual breaking down of repressions and defense mechanisms. My feminist drives, my resistance to authority, and my somewhat aggressive attitudes all toned down. I was able to accept the fact of sex differences and my own femininity



without feeling so much regret and rebellion, indeed I was fairly well reconciled to myself as a woman, at the end of some five years of clinical experience, except that I still felt as averse as ever to having children.

Not until I was thirty-five did I occasionally have the passing thought that it might not be so bad and might even be rather interesting to have children. But not until I was thirty-seven did I awaken fully to the desire for a child. This complete change in attitude on my part followed close upon my having had a series of dreams which, when analyzed by the free association method, gave me considerable further understanding of emotional responses concerning sex and children which I had kept deeply repressed heretofore. I saw more fully how strong had been my resistance to accepting my own femininity and how desperately I had struggled to approximate a masculine kind of life. The result of this deeper insight was apparently to free an accumulation of repressed emotions and desires. At first these feelings found expression in dreams and phantasies, being still not wholly a part of my conscious life. For example, there was a dream in which I pictured myself as possessing a beautiful baby of my own and delighting in this possession. Again, there was an episode of fancying that I had missed a menstrual period and imagining I might be pregnant—a fancy which pleased rather than annoyed me. I soon found that menstruation was occurring normally and recognized that I had simply been having a phantasy of being pregnant, due to my still partially repressed desires for a child. The recognition of these unconscious projections broke down my last resistance to conscious realization of my desires. There came a period of intense awareness of my longing for children. I even had sensations of bodily dissatisfaction and physiological tension somewhat similar to the sensations of unsatisfied sexual cravings.

I am now approaching the age of thirty-eight. Since I have never been pregnant, in spite of depending upon a birth control technique which is considered in medical research to be very unreliable, I suspect that I am sterile and incapable of having a child. Even if I could have one, it would be rather undesirable at my age. It would perhaps be dangerous to my own health, and certainly would be unfair to the child, to judge from my clinical contacts with elderly parents. For these and certain other reasons, I do not expect to gratify my longing for children.

This raises the problem of how I shall adjust to a situation in which my desires will not be gratified. It seems to me that the full consciousness of those desires instead of my early complete repression and my more recent partial repression of them into the unconscious, is in itself an excellent step toward adjustment. Certainly the troublesome dreams and phantasies have disappeared, and the first intensity of the physiological sensations has passed. At first I felt somewhat bitter that the desire for a

child had come to me so late, but I seldom indulge in regrets for the past or daydreams of what might have been. My habitual pattern, I think, is to face my problems and situations fairly realistically. I do not see life as bringing to any one the gratification of all their desires, but as a series of situations to which continual readjustments must be made. Had my desire for children remained wholly or partly unconscious, it might have been bad for my work, as I might have reacted to some of the children coming to clinic by seizing on them as an outlet for my own emotional needs. Now I do not expect this to happen. Certainly I did not continue to project my own resentment of maternal authority into clinic cases once I fully understood my own feelings about it. And so far as my own peace of mind and emotional stability is concerned, while the time in which I was gradually becoming conscious of my desire for a child was rather upsetting and disturbing—because my feelings seemed so new and strange—now that I have accepted those feelings I am fairly comfortable with them.

I question whether the change in myself which I have been describing would be typical for many women who had as much early resistance to accepting their feminine destiny. I doubt if it would have come about with me had it not been for my intimate contacts with psychology and my clinical work. But I may be wrong in this opinion, and it may be that many other women have come to the same late awareness of the desire for children of their own.

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## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE COMING OF THE CHILD AND THE FAMILY ROUTINE

**The new routine.** The coming of the child changes the life of the average man and woman almost as much as marriage. For some it represents a break in the former routine to which they never become reconciled. This resentment against the necessary reconstruction of family life is not commonly serious, but it draws attention to the impossibility of holding to a mere husband and wife routine.

In all normal cases it is the life of the mother that changes most, for upon her fall chiefly the responsibilities of child care. Even if she has the means to procure a nurse so that she is relieved of much of the actual physical and mechanical labor, she still ordinarily exercises managerial control and this with the necessary supervision cuts into both her time and her attention. In most households the mother must from the first give the child personal care, and however much she may enjoy this, it means abandonment of her previous family program.

The mother who cares for her first-born, however happy she may be, frequently finds, especially during the first days after her return from the hospital, that her task is difficult and never ending. She is surprised to find how constantly she must keep in mind the details of her new undertaking, and it may seem that she can never expect to get her household back upon a routine which will give her a degree of leisure and opportunity for other interests. Indeed, it is true that many mothers never do regain the command they formerly held over their housekeeping. The child disrupts it so seriously that it never settles back upon a systematic routine.

The modern woman who goes to the hospital is introduced to a routine for the care of her infant which she does well to follow. It is true that nearly always when the infant comes to the home changes have to be made but these are not difficult if the essential features of a systematic program are continued. Formerly mothers did not have the relief that so definite a routine brings, and perhaps under earlier conditions of American life it would have been extremely difficult to fol-

low closely any system of infant care. The mother has not been forgotten in the working out of the program which starts at the hospital, but this does not mean that the infant's interests have been compromised. An orderly scheme for bath, meals, naps and exercise is so advantageous for the infant himself that even if it were no help to the mother it would still be followed for his good.

**Father and child.** In spite of the fact that the mother must ordinarily be chiefly concerned with the care of her infant, it is a mistake for the father not to take a serious interest in the new household program, and, if he has any opportunity, to share actively in caring for the infant. In the average middle class and working class home the mother during the first month or two after her return from the hospital physically needs any assistance she can have. This is no small matter, since her attitude toward the having of children and her feeling toward her husband may both be influenced by whether he does or does not in any practical way give her sympathy and help. Mothers who are prematurely old in appearance without question are often aged not merely because they have had several children but because their burden of child care has been great and they have had little or no assistance.

There is, however, a more positive motive for the father's sharing the care of the child than merely that this brings relief to the mother who so easily can be over-fatigued and emotionally depressed. The child not only needs two parents; he needs them from the start. If the father is ever going to be a practicing parent he must start early instead of looking forward to some later time when his offspring will be old enough, in his opinion, for the establishment of some degree of fellowship. If the father gives his time grudgingly or with the feeling that he is merely performing a necessary task in justice to his wife, he misses an important part of what the experience has to offer him.

A dutiful mother is a poor substitute for the kind of mother that serves the child with genuine pleasure. It is exactly the same in the case of the man. Parenthood has as much educational and character value for the man as for the woman, but to neither do the benefits come merely from the empty rôle of parenthood. That in itself contributes nothing. It is the fellowship of the child and the parent, the development of responsibility by the father and mother, and the feeling of security and later the expression of loyalty by the child that give parenthood the social significance that it still has. Modern life

has increased the leisure of most men and is likely to increase it further. One of the most profitable ways of utilizing this new leisure is to invest it in the practice of fatherhood.

The following case shows how the need by the young mother of assistance from her husband became the pivot upon which her routine revolved.

#### *Case 46*

During the first week after I returned from the hospital I was afraid to carry the child about. I felt so weak and the child seemed to give such hearty kicks at inopportune moments that I feared that I might drop it. Thus I had my maid carry it for me during the day and my husband at night.

I didn't mind its crying. A child that moans or gets hysterical worries me but my child had a nice husky yell that sounded as if she were saying that she didn't think much of this old world anyway, an attitude that I admired her for, and I felt sure that no child that yelled like that could be feeling bad physically.

The problem of keeping to schedule did not bother me either. I took it for granted that the child was to be awakened when it was time to feed. Since I began working outside the house for a short time each day when Nancy was three weeks old, it was necessary for me to keep to the schedule anyway.

It was hard to wake up for the night feeding, for I still felt quite tired, but my husband always brought the baby to me and that made it not nearly so hard. My daughter never did cry enough at night to get me up.

Bathing the child was, however, a problem. To hold a wiggling soapy child in the small tub before it could hold its own head up I found very difficult. It was almost impossible for me to lift her out without; it seemed to me, great danger of dropping her or breaking whatever part of her anatomy I held onto. One hand had to hold her head up, the other would slip, and to make things worse the child would always begin to kick violently when being lifted out.

I solved my problem by ignoring all rules and regulations and bathing my child at 5:30 every day just before supper. At this hour my husband was home and we would hold the squirming, often squealing, little thing in the tub while my husband soaped her, and I would hold her neck and support her back when taking her out and my husband would see that she didn't kick herself out of my grasp.

Often I used to wonder who enjoyed the bath more, the lively child or the admiring father.

Some of my friends feared that the child would take cold when daily I

turned her loose, naked, on the bed to wiggle about to the best of her ability, but unlike some young mothers I had a rather exaggerated idea, I'm afraid, of the value of my own judgment.

The child seemed strong and healthy and by following the doctor's directions and not asking advice of others I at least saved myself a lot of wear and tear on my nerves and did not have the continual fear that I might be doing something wrong.

**Difficulties of the first few weeks.** It is well for both husband and wife to keep in mind the fact that ordinarily the most difficult time in the care of the infant, at least in the case of the first child, is in the first few weeks. Various reasons contribute to this. The mother is generally weaker and more easily fatigued than later. The husband may not have recovered from the emotional ordeal that was his as the wife passed through childbirth. Most parents may not have realized how much the child cried at the hospital and may suppose that something has gone wrong with him when he turns night into day by untimely wailing. It may be also that the child is somewhat affected by the change in his environment, and needs time to become adjusted. In any case he is slightly older and this in itself may make him seem different. The following bears testimony to an extremely common experience.

#### *Case 47*

The first two weeks we had the infant home were a nightmare. My friends said I didn't keep her warm enough. Anyhow she yelled whenever she was awake and slept very poorly, especially at night. But now she is a model child and I'm back at my gadding again, leaving a bottle prepared for her when I'm away, not oftener than once in twenty-four hours.

**Child care not an instinct.** Among the higher animals, which give some care to their offspring, instinct takes command. As a rule it is the female that is endowed with the hereditary equipment that makes possible the carrying on of activities that lead to survival of the young animal. In proper time this instinct fades away and the two generations go their separate ways.<sup>1</sup>

On the human level this maternal instinct has been lost and in its place appears a complicated, deeply conditioned habit-response to the young child. This permits a more variable, conscious and prolonged

<sup>1</sup> Robert Briffault, *The Mothers*, Vol. I, p. 112.



attention to offspring.<sup>2</sup> There is no evidence of anything of an hereditary character that prepares the mother to care for the child more intelligently or with more satisfaction than the father. The conventional procedure is a product of the division of labor between the two sexes due to social conditioning and to persistent tradition. Affection itself appears to be a product of a social situation rather than a direct structural inheritance. Psychologists differ in their interpretation of the conditioning circumstances that arouse parental affection, but they are nearly unanimous in insisting that it is something other than instinct.<sup>3</sup>

#### Case 48

In my case affection for my first-born sprang from its utter helplessness. A very young baby is not much to look at and is much less responsive than a domesticated animal, and at first I know my tenderness for the boy was not so great as I had felt as a child toward some of my pet dogs and cats.

However, the very idea that anybody might hurt the child, that it might be thirsty and nobody would think to give it water, would make me furious. It is from that protective feeling, I believe, that parental love springs.

Of course it is different in cases where a woman has long yearned for a child, but I had been married only about two years, and the child came before I had really made up my mind whether I wanted one yet or not. The fact that I had carried it for nine months gave it more personality than it would otherwise have had in my eyes. When it had kept me awake nights with its kicking I had scolded it and threatened to spank it when I got my hands on it. Therefore I thought of the baby as a rambunctious soul with a mind of its own even before I saw it.

Yet I had little curiosity about it during the ten days I was at the hospital, never even looked at its toes, partly perhaps because I felt so tired and was too glad to lie quiet to show curiosity about much of anything.

When I got home and began to take care of the child myself I got more and more fond of him, until now I'm sure there are not many mothers any more foolish about the achievements and importance of their offspring than I am about mine.

There is no evidence from any source that it is more difficult for the man than for the woman to develop affection for their infant, or that the former experience is less wholesome than the latter. The sit-

<sup>2</sup> L. L. Bernard, *An Introduction to Social Psychology*, p. 135.

<sup>3</sup> Floyd Allport, *Social Psychology*, p. 359, and Robert S. Woodworth, *Psychology*, pp. 251-252, and Dorothy D. Bromley, "This Maternal Instinct," *Harper's Magazine*, September, 1929, pp. 423-433.

uation in which the mother finds herself is provocative of maternal attitude, while the father ordinarily is so much less constantly in contact with the child that he does not develop the same quality of emotional attachment. Numerous exceptions to this statement show how easily in a definite situation the father's affection may equal or exceed that of the mother.

**A joint enterprise.** In the discussion of child training in the next chapter emphasis will necessarily be placed on the joint character of the bringing up of children. Nothing is so important as the recognition of this from the start. It is a fact that emerges just as soon as the establishment of household routine after the coming of the child from the hospital demands attention; for no member of the family, husband, wife or other children, can adjustments continue as they were before the coming of the child.

The burden of these changes cannot fall merely on the wife in justice either to her or to the other persons concerned. This is what will be likely to happen in those cases in which the husband does not from the beginning take an active interest in the child's welfare and according to his opportunity invest some of his free time in caring for the child and being with it. It is true that in following out the modern program neither mother nor father will spend a great deal of time in entertaining the infant, but although he must be mostly left to himself, when he does receive attention it should not be merely from the mother. For the father not to enter actively into the child's life from the very beginning is a mistake that will appear more clearly with the increase of years.

The purpose of this chapter is not to rehearse in detail for the mother the directions for taking care of the child that are now so readily procured in books of a popular character, but rather to emphasize matters of concern to husbands and wives who seek to strengthen their domestic adjustment by good use of the opportunities of parenthood.

However strongly coöperative any relationship may be, it never yields its potential satisfactions until it is intelligently directed and expressed in concrete practices. This is as true of domestic adjustment as of any other association. A large part of the failure to achieve a higher degree of happiness in marriage comes from not bringing good will and generous intention to a practical issue. Domestic experience takes various forms and each offers opportunity for the

strengthening of affection if only there is a purposeful, intelligent working together.

There is a sense in which the coming of the child represents a crisis in the relations of husband and wife. If each recognizes the need of understanding the problems presented by the child their fellowship is increased, but this cannot come about unless the new situation becomes more than a mere emotional episode. For that reason both husband and wife need to be familiar with the important details of child care, even though the actual charge of the child falls upon the wife, or in a family of means, upon a nurse.

**Sources of information.** No intelligent American mother is content to attempt the care of an infant without the assistance of a book of instruction. There are a great many available books, for along no other line has medical science done so much to popularize conditions that make for good health. As a consequence the brightest part of the preventive program of medicine has been the decreasing risks of physical infancy. The declining death rate of infants and children attests the success in this field of applied medical science. Books are to be had everywhere that are inexpensive, authoritative, clear, interesting, and practical. They not only help the mother to lessen the dangers of the early years of her child; they also lighten her labor and give her a background of understanding, adding zest to the doing of what otherwise might be a mere task.

The best books are written by specialists in pediatrics and no other type should be accepted. The very best books are not fashioned after the manner of the old-time cook book, nor do they deal with problems. They seldom give any detailed account of childhood diseases, since it is not the business of any parent not medically trained to diagnose or prescribe for the sick child. This used to be a prominent part of the earlier books for mothers but it is distinctly mischievous to give the parent the impression that he or she can deal with the sick child or that there is need of anything more than a brief description of symptoms and diseases that parents might not otherwise notice and bring to the attention of the doctor.

The proper business of the parent is to establish conditions that make for health, but even this cannot be accomplished without the constant assistance of the medical specialist. To give encouragement to the idea still prevalent among many American parents that they can deal with the early stages of illness in their child is to mislead them

into delaying to seek the diagnosis of a competent physician. The parent does need to know what to do in case of accident where much depends upon intelligent first aid.

**How to follow out the instruction given by the doctor when a child is sick.** A rational society will one day insist that first aid instruction be given every prospective parent. Meanwhile, a parent of good sense will desire to know what to do in case of burns, cuts, falls, convulsions, the swallowing of foreign substances, the eating of poison, and such happenings. This information needs to be known before accidents occur. Nothing could be more unfortunate than for the young mother to run for help to a neighbor who may have no other basis for the giving of counsel than confidence in what is nothing less than superstition. There are so many kinds of poisonous substances that the careful mother will post a list of antidotes inside the medicine closet. This preparedness is not an expression of morbid fear but an intelligent attempt to be ready for an emergency if ever it should come.

For example, any one who lives in a country neighborhood where copperhead or other poisonous snakes are encountered with any degree of frequency realizes that the poison of a dangerous snake brings greater hazard to the child than to the adult. It is a satisfaction to the cautious parent out of all proportion to its cost to keep in his refrigerator a powerful antidote for venom which could be easily and quickly injected into the child, a substance which otherwise could not be procured for an hour or two at a time when minutes are fateful. Such a preparedness costing only a few dollars is more sensible than the worry of some parents or their persistent warning of the child concerning danger, which is likely either to make him timid or to drive him into foolhardy experimentation.

Books on the physical care of the child must not be thought of as mere discussions of how to meet problems in early child life. They have out-traveled this earlier emphasis and present a constructive, positive program with incidental attention to problems, while most of the books dealing with child training on the contrary still stress the more superficial outlook.

A good example of this better emphasis on a constructive program of child care is the description of a mother's typical daily routine in one of the most used books on infant care.<sup>4</sup> There can be no com-

<sup>4</sup> Richard M. Smith, *The Baby's First Two Years*, pp. 106-131.



parison between such an interpretation and the type of book most popular a generation ago which suggested a volume of recipes with detailed treatment of common childhood diseases.

**The biography of a baby.** It will prove helpful and interesting if from the start a simple but constant summary is kept of various facts concerning the child. This will not only prove of benefit in checking up on the development of the child; it will in later years become a valuable possession of the family. Books may be purchased which are published for parents desiring to keep the baby's record, but most of them are likely to suggest emphasis upon sentimental happenings rather than upon pertinent facts. An ordinary, sizable blank book, with substantial covers, will prove serviceable, and a few moments invested regularly in recording important data will be most satisfactory. A concise health record, giving the dates of contagious diseases, and of inoculations and vaccinations, will be of practical value in later years.

**Therapeutic routine.** The key to wholesome child care is the building of a therapeutic routine. Just as a skilled horticulturist has a definite program for spraying at various times, cultivation, fertilizing, and other activities, the value of which has been determined by investigation and experiment, so the mother follows a similar routine, in greater detail, for the purpose of insuring for her child the most favorable conditions for health and growth. Of course, there has to be adaptation to the individual, but this is true also in plant cultivation.

The proper care of the eyes may be used as an example of routine care. As soon as the child is born, in a well-conducted hospital or wherever there is any attempt to follow scientific technique in the home, the eyes of the new-born infant are washed with an antiseptic, ordinarily a solution of silver nitrate or some compound including it. This is not done on the presumption that the mother is infected with gonorrhea but because any risk whatsoever of such an infection from any source is criminal when safety can be had by so simple and harmless a procedure. Before this became a regular practice in child delivery, a considerable proportion of children were born, soon to become blind. This technique in many of our states is enforced by legislation. The Massachusetts law, passed in 1911, in three years reduced the cases of blindness resulting from ophthalmia fifty per cent. Rosenau tells us that there was no new case of gonorrheal ophthalmia

in that commonwealth in the years 1919 and 1920.<sup>5</sup> It has been estimated that previous to this technique from twenty-five to thirty per cent of blindness in children had been the result of gonorrheal infection.

Any unusual happening that seems to be a variation from the normal should be reported to the physician who will know whether it is something that needs attention or not. Some mothers, occasionally even nurses, do things to the baby that ought not to be undertaken without specific orders from the doctor. An example of this is washing out the baby's mouth.

Each morning following the day of birth the nurse at the hospital washes the baby's eyes with a clean piece of cotton soaked in a fresh solution of boric acid or some similar mild antiseptic. When the mother takes over the care of the child she protects the baby's eyes from the light. She also for a time uses a wash, usually two per cent boric acid solution, with a fresh piece of cotton for each eye. After two months or so she may use plain boiled water. If she notices red or swollen eyelids, especially any yellowish discharge, she at once reports it to the physician, because it is something that should have immediate diagnosis and attention. She continues to look out for excessive light, not allowing the sun to shine directly into the baby's unprotected eyes and not permitting him to fixate upon strong artificial light. If there is any tendency toward his becoming cross-eyed or any noticeable defect, the service of the oculist is sought, for much can be done to correct any such trouble, if only science is permitted to work early. When the child starts to school in a progressive community his eyes are tested and any fault of vision is corrected. The thought of the parent throughout this program is prevention rather than cure, and the mother's responsibility from the start is to keep the eyes healthy. The same point of view is maintained in caring for the skin, teeth, nose, ears, hair, and genital organs as well as the major functions of the body—digestion, respiration, and elimination.

**Breast feeding.** When the principle of a therapeutic routine is followed it means the adoption of a program of child care which medical experience has proved wise. For instance, it becomes clear that no woman who can nurse her child should entertain the thought of attempting for pleasure or convenience to bring him up by bottle. This

<sup>5</sup> M. J. Rosenau, *Preventive Medicine and Hygiene*, pp. 91-92.

means more than merely assuming the task of nursing him, since the nervous mother or the badly fed mother, or a mother careless of her own hygiene cannot provide the child with the kind of milk he needs. The whole life of the mother and that of the household are involved in giving the child the food that means for him most favorable conditions for life and growth. Since the emotional life of the mother influences her milk, the husband, indeed the entire household, enters the picture, making it easier or harder for her to do justice to her infant.

A little later when the child must have cow's milk added to his diet, the community itself in its laws of public sanitation and their administration becomes a factor, and where there is public graft, ignorance, or indifference in regulating the production and distribution of milk, the child's life to that degree is menaced.

**Weighing the child.** Included in a therapeutic routine of child care is the periodic weighing and measuring of the growing infant. Babies lose considerable weight during the first few days of their life. After the first week they ordinarily begin to gain weight at the rate of five or six ounces every seven days for about a year; then they add weight more slowly. The mother weighs the child accurately once every week, and carefully records the weight. If for two weeks she sees little or no increase, she knows that something is the matter and wisely calls upon her physician to counsel her as to what should be done. Some mothers weigh the child every day. This merely leads to unreasonable anxiety since the weekly record is significant rather than the day by day variation. Periodically the child is measured as to height, and in every good handbook for mothers there is found a chart showing the average scale of weight and height. Emphasis needs to be placed on the fact that this is only a statement of averages and that each child is an individual. The bony structure is in part at least an hereditary factor that must be taken into account in the judgment of what is the normal weight of the particular child. Sleep, rest, exercise, fresh air and sunshine are other major elements constantly recognized in the working out of a wholesome routine.

**Periodic examination.** It is most desirable that at least once a year, beginning in the second or third month, the child should be given a thorough examination by a pediatrician. Often I have heard it said by a proud father: "I have never spent a cent in medical care for my children." This is a confession of ignorance and misunderstanding of the responsibilities of wholesome parenthood. It repre-

sents neglect, and even though the child appears healthy and husky, there is no guarantee that he has no defect or that no unsound condition is developing which will later make trouble.

Society has not yet worked out a scheme by which the majority of adults can make full use of preventive medicine. For the most part men and women still look upon medical service as purely curative. We have done better in the physical care of the infant and are already utilizing to a considerable degree the resources of preventive medicine. It is still, however, not generally recognized, even by intelligent men and women, that the growing child should be carefully examined periodically not only to prevent disease but to achieve the largest possible measure of health and vigor. The mere fact that growth in weight and height and the appearance of health exist is no reason for denying the child a periodic thorough examination.

If it be objected that this is too expensive a program for the average family, the answer is that even from the viewpoint of the community reasonable care of the growing child is a social investment that, no matter how narrowly considered, proves profitable. In every progressive community provision is made for the yearly examination of children, often as an unpaid public service of physicians. Charity cannot be the final solution for a responsibility that is distinctly social, but meanwhile, except in isolated, backward and indifferent communities, there does exist provision for the proper care of the child through the use of free or inexpensive clinics. The real trouble is at present that the average middle class parent has no realization of the importance of the periodic checking of the physical condition of the child.

**Firmness in following the routine.** It takes pluck to carry out the proper routine in the care of the young child. No one would want such an inflexible schedule that it could not be changed for serious reasons, but courage is required to prevent modification for timid and unnecessary reasons. Neighbors, friends, and relatives are most likely to tempt one to put aside the regularity and sensible procedure so distinctly favorable to the growing child. This may not be true in later generations, but, as many experienced parents will testify, this at present is the great obstacle to the proper care of children. Visitors expect to see the child even though it means disturbing him, and often when they have no genuine interest in him, but are merely trying to be polite. Relatives often insist upon fondling the infant at times or in ways that they should not and they are prone to over-



stimulate him if they get any chance. Later they stuff the young child with candy or with food between meals contrary to the policy of the parents. They even plague and frighten little children as a strange means of personal amusement. If they are rebuked, as they well deserve to be, they are often hurt or angry. Older children are noisy and rough and even take to hectoring their very young brothers and sisters.

There is only one way to meet these various attacks on the child's welfare and that is to be firm at the start. This is the way of wisdom and usually proves the best policy. It nips trouble in the bud and is less likely, if protest is made squarely and kindly, to lead to personal estrangement. However, if the parent is driven to the issue, there should be no compromise. Relatives or friends who insist upon interference and who will not recognize that the parents, being responsible, must have complete control of the child's routine, may well be estranged rather than that the child should be made a prey to their irresponsible and unthinking influence. The parent who wavers has most trouble, for where firmness is evident, visitors and friends are forced to accept the parental policy whether they like it or not.

**Taking pleasure in the child.** Much has been said in recent years, and rightly, condemning parental indulgence in extravagant expression of emotions. This has led some conscientious parents to a wrong thought of child care. A mother recently remarked in consultation, "Nevertheless, I intend to enjoy my children." There is nothing in the teaching of science which should make any father or mother suppose that the joy of caring for a child is something that must be defended. The proper routine of child care does not antagonize the pleasure the normal mother and father take in serving the child. It is the self-indulgence of unrestrained emotion that the scientists condemn.

#### *Case 49*

S. G., after living several years of marriage childless, has adopted a child. She is an intelligent woman and takes an unusual interest in the reading of literature relating to child care and training. She is familiar with all the important theories, is a persistent reader of the best-known books. Her child is well taken care of and has always been remarkably healthy. Nevertheless, the home atmosphere is distinctly injurious to the child and will become every year more so. It seems impossible that the child can ever achieve, under such conditions, a normal happy life. The

trouble is that the mother has no other interest and shows no restraint in expressing her affection. She talks of nothing else. She boasts of the child's attainments in his presence, she shows him off at every opportunity and is with him almost constantly. So far as principles of sanitation, hygiene and physical routine are concerned, she is a well-nigh faultless mother. Her lack of balance and self-control and restraint make her so increasingly dangerous that it is a pity the child cannot be withdrawn from a home atmosphere that is bound to be disastrous. It is good for a father and mother to enjoy their child, but it is a calamity when they enjoy only the child.

**Changed family attitudes.** It is well to notice that the family routine is not the only thing that changes at the coming of the child. Especially in the case of the first-born there is readjustment of the entire household, which includes a new relationship of husband and wife. There can be no doubt that in some cases the new situation is resented, either by the wife or by the husband. There is a feeling that affection has been decreased or even withdrawn in favor of the child. It is also true that occasionally when the wife's attitude toward her husband has been largely maternal she loses much of her former feeling for him and transfers it to the child. The psychoanalyst and the novelist have produced a literature replete with illustrations of such happenings in domestic relations.

It is to be expected that the entrance into the family circle of another personality should reconstruct the family setting. Not to have this happen would be to treat the child forever as an intruder and not let him have his just part in the life of the household. This reconstruction of family life does not necessarily mean robbing any of the older members of their share of affection. Love is not a quantitative thing so that what goes to the child has to be taken from some other member of the family. It is not the coming of the child that is the seat of trouble in instances where resentment is felt, but either the emotional immaturity of the individual who feels hurt or the unreasonable concentration of the parent who forgets all others in his or her attachment to the child. In the latter case the coming of the child has probably merely brought to the surface the lack of genuine affection which had drifted into the marriage from the start.

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## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE STRATEGY OF CHILD TRAINING

**A continuation of the child care program.** In the latter part of the nineteenth century there began to develop a science of child life. G. Stanley Hall, then President of Clark University, was among the first in this country to attempt serious investigation of the nature of the child and his experiences. Once started, this new interest developed rapidly, and it is now the basis of modern child training.

The parent is apt to think of his function in child guidance as quite different from his responsibilities in caring for the infant, but the correct way of interpreting the new task is to regard it as an expansion of the earlier therapeutic program. As the child increases in size and capacity, his activities are multiplied and the direction that falls upon the parent is more varied, less repetitious and more demanding in judgment. Essentially, the parent's problem remains the same. He has now much more than mere body welfare to consider but even from the start his motives have not been narrow. Science insists that from the beginning of infancy the child responds to environmental circumstances in such a way that his character begins to form itself and habit life which means so much in later periods gets its start. The form of the parent's service changes and there is no such definite routine as that carried on during the infant's dependency, but the point of view remains the same. Child care and child training are merely two different periods in the parental program. New conditions arise because of the ever-advancing maturity of the child, but the policy of the parent only widens to include consideration of a broader area of experience.

For convenience we attempt to separate in the growing child his physical, his mental, and his social characteristics. Useful as our classification proves, it leads to error in so far as it encourages the idea that we are concerned with three separated aspects of the child's life rather than with a connected personality revealing itself in three phases. Body, mind, and conduct are so inter-related that attention upon any one has relations to the other two. For example, posture

and nutrition are not merely matters that concern body welfare. The narrow-chested child or the undernourished child suffers handicaps that appear in his mental and social habits just as surely as they hamper body health. Efficient parenthood tries to give the child the conditions of wholesome physical, mental, and social growth even though detailed attention is directed at one time to something that concerns most distinctly the body and at other times to that which concerns the mental or social interests.

The parent still maintains the preventive policy which characterized the therapeutic routine during infancy. There cannot be the same regularity of routine because the child's personality is beginning to count and to initiate situations which the parent can neither foresee nor wisely attempt to regulate with exactness. Nevertheless the prevention of trouble rather than efficiency in handling difficulties, once they occur, is the effort of the parent who can draw from the studies made by the scientific investigator insight into his responsibilities and assistance in working out his program. But he cannot follow a system to the degree that was possible in the earlier period of his routine and more and more his own personality as well as his knowledge and skill become factors in the education of his child.

There is greater need than ever of conscious coöperation of husband and wife since now the child is not only distinctly conscious of the two personalities that come in contact with his life but extremely keen to detect any differences of opinion, variation in practices, and tension between the two.

At the present time in the United States a considerable problem is created by the fact that the mothers have naturally taken a greater interest in discussions of child training than have fathers. Perhaps it is to be expected that mothers ordinarily will make the greater effort to get the assistance of science as they try to meet their responsibility. The mischief comes from the fact that the father who is unfamiliar or hostile to the new science of child care is likely to interfere with the child training as he would not with the care of the infant, because he has more confidence in his own understanding of the problems involved, and as a consequence even when he does not intend to do this he may antagonize the better technique of the mother. On the other hand, there are mothers who, although they look to science for help and learn much that should be of service to them in their association with their children, are nevertheless prevented from making good use

of their knowledge on account of their own personal emotional handicaps.

The way out of the present difficulty is not to turn the child more fully over to the mother on the basis that she alone has the scientific background necessary for good parenthood but rather for the father to gain enough insight to make him a willing coöperator. Indeed he should be more than this, for he has a positive rôle. No child can be safely adjusted for life whose preparation has come exclusively from maternal influences. Under prevailing social conditions the woman is more likely also to be emotionally dissatisfied and this makes it all the more desirable that the child's outlook upon life should come from active contact with both father and mother.

The husband who has no sympathy with the new ideas of child-training that are coming out of the scientific study of children must necessarily fall back upon his own childhood experiences and traditions for principles to guide him in his associations with his children. If this happens while the mother does her best to apply the teachings of science an inconsistency in the home atmosphere is early felt by the child and to this he responds in a way that makes it difficult for him to achieve wholesome personality. There can be no escape from this danger other than convincing the fathers as well as the mothers that there is a substantial science of child care, the essential principles of which need to be understood by every adult that attempts to influence children.

Science contributes to the situation in other ways than by merely developing better knowledge of child life. The results of the modern interest in child study are felt at many different points in the family experience and it is here that the great fallacy of attempting to carry on the child's training after the manner of one's own childhood appears. We cannot assume a situation for our children similar to that which we went through in our childhood. This fact is sufficient to render futile any attempt to continue the child-training program of an earlier time.

The greatest change has come about from the freer expression of the child itself. The modern parent cannot safely, in his effort to adapt his child to the life of the modern world, assume a protective guardianship, for the longer he succeeds in maintaining this, the greater will be the disaster of the child who is finally thrown out into the everyday world. Instead, the parent has to meet the child on more equal

terms, offering him fellowship rather than attempting to command his life after the manner of former patriarchal fathers. At first it may seem as if the new way is more difficult since it does not lend itself to mechanical procedure and unchangeable maxims of guidance, but in actual experience the more modern methods do not create the stress of emotional struggle between parent and child that always accompanies a parental dominance that disregards the feelings of the latter.

Fellowship invites the growing child to enter into a friendly relationship in which the parent's authority comes from his leadership, his experience, and the confidence instilled in the child who has every desire to find in the older person security and counsel.

The modern parent is not interested chiefly in problems of child care any more than he was in problems of infancy. It is true that the literature popularized for the parent still puts emphasis upon problems in a way that has ceased to be true in the more mature material related to infancy but this is the consequence of the later development of child science and its relative backwardness. The books and articles that stress the problem idea and cater to the more artificial attitudes of parents do not give the outlook that is in accord with the present teaching of science. There are problems of child training just as there are problems in caring for the infant, but the skill to deal wisely with problems once they arise is a poor substitute for good strategy in child training. Even the problems that do appear are likely to be symptoms of unhappy and unwise situations rather than the essential matters that most need to have attention.

Good strategy of child training includes more even than the effort to prevent problems. In the earlier period of infancy prevention had a large place, but the essential purpose of the parents was to procure sound development and the largest possible measure of good health. These are equally the goal at the later period of childhood, the difference being that the meaning of health and growth has been enlarged to keep pace with the ever-widening life of the child.

No negative program of avoiding this or protecting the child from that is sufficient. It is possible to lessen problems as they are ordinarily conceived by narrowing, retarding, and bolstering up the personality of the child, but although this may permit the parent to escape perplexities and even anxiety, such a philosophy of parental responsibility is an attack on the child. It avoids struggle and minor mishaps, but at the cost of suppressing growth. Many a child through



this erroneous policy of the well-meaning parent is robbed of the power to use his native resources. Strong living comes not from evading the hazards that accompany growth but by learning to surmount them. The issue here is fundamental, and it is unfortunate that so many parents who desire the good use of modern science conceive their obligation as the handling or preventing of problems. Even if they were successful, and ordinarily they avoid minor problems only to throw upon the child at a later time a larger and unescapable penalty, full accomplishment of these purposes would lead only to what Tennyson describes:

Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,  
Dead perfection, no more.

**Importance of habit.** The science of child life has added meaning to the famous statement made years ago by William James.

"The great thing, then, in all education, is to *make our nervous system our ally instead of our enemy*. It is to fund and capitalize our acquisitions, and live at ease upon the interest of the fund. *For this we must make automatic and habitual, as early as possible, as many useful actions as we can*, and guard against the growing into ways that are likely to be disadvantageous to us, as we should guard against the plague."<sup>1</sup> Nothing could state more clearly the fundamental import of the habit life as forming the very tissue of personality, but modern science has added further insight which has done much to clarify the task of the parent.

Habit-making starts with life itself, and it is only in the early period, long before individuals can respond to the exhortation of James, that there is any considerable freedom to direct the making of habit. During the first six years we cut out our habit pattern and find later that what appeared flimsy as paper has become more unyielding than cement. Obviously for the most part we do not choose our masters; they are put upon us and we break from them later with the greatest difficulty. Certainly the child does not choose his destiny; it is adult-made. Some older person who commands the stimuli that play upon his life and who furnishes the situations in which the child finds himself gives the habits their direction. Soon they are more than methods of activity; they are the very substance of the personality itself. The basic habits, once formed, go forward with

<sup>1</sup> William James, *Psychology*, Briefer Course, p. 144.

the growth, changing to make necessary adaptation to circumstances, but sticking to their original character. New habits are formed in accord with the demand of the stage of development, but these have to tie up with the earlier construction, so that the range of freedom narrows rapidly. It is true that we have examples of cataclysmic changing of habits, but even such a rare redirecting of trends of behavior reveals the ongoing of early habit experience. There may be a violent change away from the former practices of self-expression, but the events of early childhood influence the new behavior as they dominated the old.

**The complexity of habit life.** Science has taught us that this habit life which so soon becomes character is vastly more complex than once was thought. We do not inherit habits, but the physical characteristics of the body play a part in habit-making. Starting with the skeleton, we find every important feature of body life contributing its part in the process of habit making.<sup>2</sup> The biological history of the organism makes its additions to the habit trends. The effect, for example, of organic weakness as a cause of inferiority feeling has given us one of the most valuable clues to the meaning of emotional conflict.<sup>3</sup> The endocrine glands, of course, have a vital part in turning the individual toward definite characteristics of habit behavior.<sup>4</sup> Thus, if it be true that the habit life makes the personality, it is equally a fact that everything that enters into the history of the individual has a significance in directing the habit life that received its foundation in the early years.

There is another fact that needs recognition. In the earlier discussions of science emphasis was placed upon the activities, as, for example, in the epoch-making discussions of William James, but in recent years we have discovered that there is another side of habit which is at least as important as that which was first studied. The emotional side of the habit is a genuine feature, as well organized as activity. In a sense it is itself a peculiar kind of activity only taking place within consciousness itself. Science, for the purpose of clear thinking, severs this emotional side of habit life from its other aspect, conduct. The two are so closely tied together that this distinction may be misleading

<sup>2</sup> "The First Colloquium on Personality Investigation," *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. VIII, No. 6, pp. 1129-1136.

<sup>3</sup> Alfred Adler, *The Neurotic Constitution*.

<sup>4</sup> Wm. A. White, *Foundations of Psychiatry*, p. 32.

to the parent who comes to feel that he is only concerned with helping the child to build up a wholesome set of activities. The even deeper need of the child is the construction of emotional attitudes which will give him the most favorable equipment for dealing with life. Here the parent has exactly the same problem that confronts him when he tries to direct the activities of the child's outward behavior. It is not what he tells the child but what he leads the child to accomplish for himself that builds up his emotional characteristics. Emotional reactions are constructed in the same way as are habit activities.

The temper tantrum of the young child may be used as an illustration of the emotional aspect of habit. The three-year-old, finding his wishes crossed, lies down on the floor and screams to attract all possible attention to his expression of anger. As a mere activity no harm is done, it injures nobody, and even if encouraged until this exhibition of feeling becomes a regular habit, when the child becomes an adult he will eventually cease to fling himself in anger on the floor, throw his arms about, kick and bellow. The significance of the experience is its emotional meaning for the personality.

Even though as an adult he will rarely if ever, so long as he remains sane, fall back to this particular expression of anger, he will, if childhood habits have been allowed to persist, reveal the same sort of reaction but in a different form. He will fly into a rage or attempt by the trouble he makes and the attention he gets to force his selfish will on others until by being intensely disagreeable he gets what otherwise would be denied him. The menace of the early habit is in this building up of self-centered, uncontrolled emotional trends which will appear when the person is confronted with the need of curbing his own interests. If his early temper tantrums work successfully and he succeeds in coercing the judgment of the parent who gives in rather than see his child troubled, every encouragement is provided for making the child's outbursts a means of coercing others. Later the adult may find that weeping or swearing or throwing furniture about is a profitable means of showing temper, but the latter's discharge of anger is merely an adaptation of the early childhood behavior.

The emotional habit persists, the difference being that whereas it can be readily handled in its earlier form it will become a characteristic reaction of the adult once it has been allowed to continue beyond childhood. Experience proves that it is just as bad to punish the child and thereby increase his grievance as it is to give in to him

and let him see that when he wants his way he need only make disturbance enough and no one will thwart him. Instead of making the mistake of either punishing or catering to the child, the wise parent deals with the situation rationally, letting the child discover that his exhibition is futile, and refusing even to give the attention that is expected. On the other hand, the parent gives serious consideration to the influences that stimulate the child to break forth into his emotional outbursts. His environment, physical state, possible suggestion from others, every factor that may have entered into the situation is studied. Effort is directed toward eliminating any condition that encourages such upheavals. At a later time when the child is quiet he is told that the tantrum is a hopeless method of overcoming difficulties.

The aim of the parent is not to inhibit expression. This could be accomplished by punishment severe enough to put an end to the child's inclination to attempt the temper tantrum as a means of fulfilling his wishes. The mere checking of expression of his emotion might result in the development of some sort of conversion hysteria which would mean the same emotional fault in a more serious form.<sup>5</sup>

**The parent's handicap.** It becomes clear that the rôle of the parent is significant not only because he has such power to direct conditions that influence the growing child but because he himself is also a product of childhood happenings and must beware lest in any dealing with the child he reveal the very weakness from which he wishes to protect his son or daughter. The parent does not direct the child as the switchman in the tower decides the rails over which the approaching train must go. It is a personal reciprocal relationship in which the parent finds himself, where his own emotional flaws complicate the program which he wishes to carry out. Thus it is that parenthood rightly conceived becomes an exceptional form of education. Most education, even in college and university including the most thoroughgoing laboratory investigations, rarely gets down to the emotional life of the student himself. Thus it fails to contribute much to the pupil's emotional maturity.

The task of child guidance on the other hand forces the parent to become acquainted with his own emotional trends and, as he tries to do well by the child, to achieve sounder attitudes himself. It is this

<sup>5</sup> Mary Chadwick, *The Neurotic Child*, Proceedings of the First International Congress on Mental Hygiene, pp. 454-56.



that explains why the scientists dealing with the problems of badly adjusted children were so soon forced to recognize that the real difficulties were with the parents or at least that no genuine change in the causal situations could be accomplished as long as the children alone were considered.

Nothing could be more mischievous than for the parent to content himself with the repetition of practices of his own parents. Not only have times changed but his interpretations of his childhood occurrences are so distorted by emotion that he becomes merely the victim of prejudice as he insists that this or that has proved good for him and therefore will be beneficial to the child. This common assumption is unquestionably the great reason for the resistance of many parents to the teachings of the science of child-life, their unwillingness to give up this *laissez faire* doctrine and to handle the child factually rather than in accord with the prejudices of an earlier day.

**The child a person.** It helps the parent to maintain a rational procedure in dealing with the child if he keeps in mind that the child, like himself, is a person. He is not growing toward a personality, he is not suddenly going to become in some future period a person. He already is one. It is true that he is weak and inexperienced, and perhaps less socialized than his father or his mother, but these differences do not deny him a personal status. Even among adults there are striking differences in the degree of maturity. The child, of course, is a rapidly changing person, but even those adults who are most stubborn in their habit life do not, when looked at over a period of years, appear unchanged. It is true that the essential framework remains the same, but this we have found is equally true of the growing child. The adult may have the power to deal with the child as capriciously and arbitrarily as he wishes, but this is merely because he is stronger, older and more resourceful. His power to carry out his will does not mean that he can safely forget that the child like himself is a person and deserves consideration just as much as any neighbor, friend, or fellow-worker.

The principles of fair dealing with the child are exactly the same as those adults are expected to follow in their ordinary social relationships. The child may not be so quick to interpret deception as the neighbor, but the trick, however expedient it may seem at the moment, is the same attack on the integrity of the personality of the child as if it were directed toward an adult. Of course, there are

ranges of human experience into which the child cannot go, but within his proper territory he responds as do his elders to explanation and consideration, and suffers at least as much from their absence.

This is the meaning of the emphasis placed upon the fellowship between parents and children in recent discussions of the art of parenthood. The child who knows that he is recognized, depended upon, and included in the family relationship as an individual having both rights and obligations, is protected from the jealousies that so easily become fixed emotional traits which come to him who feels himself neglected, manipulated, or suppressed.

The child is not only a person, he is also an individual person, struggling to achieve his own unique integration, and he cannot be made to be somebody else any more than can his father or his mother. At this point modern science reveals one of the greatest temptations of parenthood. The parent reacting against his own failures, or seeking through the child vicariously to achieve his one-time ambitions, or merely using the child to add to his vanity, struggles to force the child life into a predetermined mold and when he fails insists that it is the child and not himself that is at fault.

**Obedience.** Many of the books written for parents by specialists in child study discuss the problems of obedience. In so far as this caption suggests that obedience stands isolated from the general trend of the parental program and deserves attention as a problem unrelated to the rest of the habit life of the child, it is deceiving. It is true that the parent may and often does drive hard at what he calls the development of obedience. He conceives his task as merely the getting from the child of quick and faithful response to his commands. He is not interested in the emotional attitudes that develop nor does he question the life value of the habits that become fixed in the child's life. Moreover, as the observer soon notices, a large part of the parent's commands are issued for his own personal convenience or satisfaction and are of indifferent value to the child or even antagonistic to his welfare. Nothing could be more mischievous, even though it ends in a docile following out of orders. It is worthless as a preparation for independent self-control and can only prove helpful to the slave-minded type of individual who less and less fits into the modern world.

It is the sort of obedience that the animal trainer forces upon the creatures he wishes to exhibit at the circus, which will excite interest because they are so unlike the native animals. On the contrary, the

kind of obedience which does prepare the child for later usefulness and which is in accord with the teachings of science is a habit formation that cannot be regarded as a problem by itself. It is the normal expression of a wholesome relationship between parent and child, the one accepting the other's leadership without emotional protest, and the other faithfully considering the personality rights of the child, who is dependent only because of the limitations of his age. Automatic response to his commands is not the goal of the parent, but a loyalty and confidence which make the child eager to coöperate. The parent also takes care not to over-regulate the child's life but to allow him a large and ever-increasing self-responsibility which will give him practice in taking care of himself. Neither fear nor reward is greatly used as a motive. The value of intelligence and judgment in dealing with life is gradually interpreted so that the child looks upon obedience just as the adult of good sense looks upon trustworthy counsel.

It is most unfortunate when the well-meaning parent seeking better insight as to his responsibilities gets the impression that obedience is a sort of moral entity standing by itself, and that he must do his utmost to build the habit of obedience. As a consequence he is often led away from recognizing the influence upon his child of conditions that defeat the parental program not only along lines of obedience but in building every wholesome quality that should become a part of the child's personality. For example, over-fatigue, chronic malnutrition, mental conflict, fear, jealousy, suspicion, and the feeling of inferiority are a few of the common factors that operate to prevent obedience. Indeed, the more the father or mother succeeds in forcing the child to do what he is told without eliminating the reasons why the child rebels or protests or attempts to deceive, the more the root of the difficulty is strengthened and the child hurt.

In order that the desire to build obedience may not disturb the fellowship of parent and child, the former is careful even as to the manner in which he makes known his request. He uses a quiet voice rather than that of the bully, a kindly suggestion rather than the shouting of orders, a regard for the situation of the child when wishes are expressed rather than the habit of intruding commands with no consideration of the child's own projects or interest, explanation whenever it is sought by the child, so that he may have the means of co-operation, except on the few occasions when obedience is so important that there cannot be at the time any discussion. Due regard will be

paid to the effort of the child and his desire to obey will not be estimated by his success, since such a rigid interpretation of loyalty would be greatly resented by any adult. We demand that our honest endeavor be recognized, for we are not always able to control circumstances. The child as a growing personality has exactly the same right to have his attempt to do the things expected of him approved even when his efforts fail. The parent will particularly guard himself from using his power to command the child as a means of relieving himself from emotional stress.

**The egoistic recoil.** What may be considered the trunk line in the extension of habit making by the child has to do with the egoistic recoil. No happening in the life of any individual has so great significance as an influence upon the personality as does the experience, many times repeated, that comes to the child upon finding his egoistic desires blocked by environmental circumstances. The child views every kind of thing that concerns him as it ministers to or impedes his desires. This attitude is not a fault but an inevitable condition which has to be changed by the training process. It is the function of the parent to lead the child adroitly through the recoil that surely comes to him when he finds himself in a situation that resists the satisfaction of his desires.

This recoil that more than anything else shapes the emotional life of the individual is not merely a clash between inner desires and external facts. The collision is frequently within the personality itself, a conflict between egoistic craving and the more socialized desires that have been built up through parental influence and preceding experiences where recoil has developed into a less self-centered, more mature purpose. Often we distinguish the two factors that clash in this personality conflict as instinct and nurture. The terms are appropriate only so far as they suggest that one set of motives is more primitive and the other more refined. One represents purely egoistic motivation while the other reveals the influence of the social environment or, as we call it in sociological terminology, of the culture.

The meaning of this egoistic reaction to the barriers that sooner or later block the child's desire shows why obedience and all other specific objectives of parenthood strategy cannot be rightly thought of as isolated problems since every one of them is necessarily tied up with this chief concern of the adult, the socializing of egoistic desire. Experience has shown that the child is injured if the ego is crushed exces-



sively, inhibited, or permitted to have right of way, in so far as the parents can provide this, over all other people. The ego must be preserved while at the same time it has to be socialized.

Clearly with the ever-changing situations of everyday life the parent cannot meet his responsibilities by following a recipe for developing a hard and fast technique. Such a program works well with an animal whose egoistic reactions and emotions are of little significance, although with the higher animals there would be concern about the disposition produced by the treatment given. It might prove successful in the education of a slave, but in preparing the normal child for adjustment to the conditions of the modern world, the egoistic reaction is of supreme importance. The integration or soundness of the personality is at stake. As has been well stated, "Abstractly considered, the business of living consists fundamentally of effort, due to the assertion of one's being in the face of an environment which offers resistance. For each individual there are just two things that matter, his own self and everything else in the world as related to that self. In as far as other things aid or impede the assertion of the self they constitute a reality distinct from the self."<sup>6</sup>

The child's protest against the inflictions of an alien environment can be thought of as accompanying birth itself. His usual cry upon entering the world is doubtless testimony that he finds the new conditions into which he is thrust less comfortable than his prenatal environment. If the first overt act issuing from his environment is the placing by some one of an antiseptic solution in his eyes, he protests by tightly shutting his eyelids and otherwise expressing discomfort. Starting thus with the first moment of birth, as long as he lives the individual is constantly made conscious of the barriers against which personal cravings make no headway.

**Facing reality.** This blocking of the person by environment is a stubborn fact of existence, but the individual, even though it be for his best interest to recognize the existing situation, may deny the truth and replace actual conditions by a self-created imaginary world. In the early years of childhood when the distinction between fact and fancy is vague there is a constant temptation to be rid of unfavorable circumstances by ignoring them and shutting oneself away from them and building in their place a daydream structure that will provide

<sup>6</sup> Bernard Glueck, *Psychoanalysis and Child Guidance*, First International Conference on Mental Hygiene, pp. 535-48.

perfect satisfaction. This procedure, if much repeated, soon becomes a fundamental life habit from which come all sorts of maladjustment in dealing with concrete conditions. To prevent this we seek to build in the child a willingness to face reality.

This matter is often misinterpreted. It is taken for granted that the parent is trying to lead the child to accept existing circumstances without protest. This, of course, could only be justified if the environment were ideal and final. This it certainly is not. It is of physical and cosmic origin in part, but also of social or cultural derivation. The environment produced by the first has been and is being modified with the growth of human knowledge and as a result the second likewise changes its form as human progress is made. The parent therefore cannot safely train the child to accept with docility what happens to be the present circumstances of his life. The facts need recognition, but if they are changeable for the better, wisdom insists that modification should be made.

The child faces reality when he does not attempt to sidestep the actual situation, but this does not mean conformity to a temporary phase of experience or to circumstances that should be attacked in order to achieve a better adjustment or to make a more wholesome environment. For example, when Emily Dickinson in early adolescence was the only one among five hundred girls at Mary Lyon's famous academy to protest against the principal's edict that Christmas be made a day of fasting, she was reacting, as we now see it, in a more wholesome manner than those who by self-deceit persuaded themselves to feel that they were in sympathy with the morbid notion of their famous teacher. It is intelligent protest made only after the existing facts are clearly seen that the parent wishes implanted in the child's habit-life.

**The neurotic child.** In this inevitable clash of egoistic craving and the resistance of hostile environment, the neurotic child is especially liable to be hurt. He reveals a deviation the significance of which becomes greater as growth progresses unless it is dealt with adequately according to the principles of mental hygiene. This is just what does not happen unless the meaning of neurotic symptoms is recognized.

The child who is already handicapped is likely to be blamed at home for his failures to adjust, criticized at school, bullied by his

playmates and frowned upon by the adults of his neighborhood. Without enlightenment or assistance he must work out some sort of self-respect under circumstances which make his ego over-sensitive and his judgment clouded by emotional conflict. As a consequence the original handicap increases through unintelligent treatment until it becomes fixed. On the other hand, the neurotic child who is dealt with in accord with mental hygiene responds to the therapeutic program in a way that the adult cannot do, for the incipient neurosis of childhood has in the adult become a life disposition, and relief can then be had only by remaking the self. This is difficult not only because of the strength of years of habit life but also because it involves an admission of weakness which the sensitive self has been working all through life to conceal from himself as well as from others.

The position of the parent in dealing with the neurotic child is somewhat analogous to that in which he finds himself when his boy or girl is found to be suffering from a structural physical defect or disease. The parent must seek the diagnosis of a specialist familiar with childhood neuroses, then he must coöperate in carrying out the therapeutic program advised. But there is a difference in the situation of the parent concerned with a nervously sick child, as compared with a physically sick child, that immeasurably complicates the situation. Rarely is the father or mother involved as an adverse influence in cases of physical trouble while in the situation that operates upon the neurotic child one or both parents may not only have a prominent position but may be the essential reason for the child's trouble. To help the child the parent may need changing, and at once the problem is presented of reëducating a personality that has already become the victim of ossified habits and self-satisfying purposes.

It is not strange that the child guidance specialists, confronted with case after case of children victimized by parental influences, grow skeptical as to the value of the home as a modern means of child-training. The need of objective judgment under such circumstances, the need of reënforcing the parents' ideas by those of competent outsiders who can see the family situation without prejudice, becomes apparent. At present the major service of the child guidance clinic is remedial rather than preventive.

The child appears for examination after something has happened that reveals his need of help. We are beginning to do better than this

in intelligent families in handling the first years of the child's physical welfare, by use of the periodic examination. We do not wait until ill health announces itself, but we make it a part of the preventive therapeutic program to keep a constant check upon the physical condition of the child.

There is no reason to suppose that this will not eventually be the common practice of intelligent parents in dealing with the mental and social career of their children. Then it will be possible to detect neurotic symptoms at a time when science can do much to help the individual to make good adjustment to life. The child guidance clinic then will become, in accord with its designation, a preventive agency and from it any parent will be able to get that objective insight into the child's needs without which no parental policy is safe.

Meanwhile husband and wife can help each other by frank conference regarding the needs of their children and by inviting into their family from time to time persons in whom they have confidence and from whom they can get frank judgment regarding their children whom they as parents see through a film of emotion. Children also act differently at home and outside. Some children are happy and apparently well adjusted at home because they find this easier than making the necessary effort to get on well outside the home; others are irritable and difficult at home because they are letting down from the tremendous effort they are making to get on with their fellows at school and in the community.

**The goal of parental training.** Modern science has made clear the proper goal of parental training. It is not the business of the parent to develop the child so that the former may be emotionally satisfied. This would be exploitation. The child would become an instrument in the hands of the parent and his life would be sacrificed to the egoistic designs of the father or the mother. Instead of being trained for life the child would be snared in a net of parental selfishness.

The aim of child training can best be described as child development. It attempts the maturing of an independent, self-controlled, well-adjusted personality, free from the inclination to cling to another for support and without the emotional conflicts so easily developed in the process of growing up. The scaffolding erected temporarily by the parent for the early protection of the child is torn down. The



parent's skill has permitted the coming forth of a unique, integrated individual who has achieved a soundness of character which prepares him in turn safely to become a parent.

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## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE CLIMACTERIC

**The meaning of the climacteric.** Sex and reproduction like all other human functions change in accord with the life cycle decreed by nature. Just as at puberty the body took over new capacities, now it loses what was then given it. A popular expression for this experience is *change of life*, and the term discloses how common thought views the climacteric. The kind of life characteristic of mature men and women disappears and in its place comes something new. It is more than a giving up, it is a transformation, having positive as well as negative results.

The ancients used to speak of the experience as representing a critical period. This was because they noticed untoward happenings that emphasized the seriousness of the passing of sex vigor and its final decay and disappearance. As compared with the tumultuous experience of puberty the climacteric is commonly less crucial. The former expression, change of life, came in part from emphasis upon the negative meaning of the experience. Even though puberty brings trouble it is associated with growth and the onward going of the individual, while the climacteric is linked with the decline and passing of an important human function. The transition is in general more consequential for the woman than for the man. The change at puberty likewise meant more to the girl than to the boy, and now sex and reproduction, which have had so much to do with the individual's human destiny, by fading away make necessary a considerable adjustment of body, mind, and social behavior.

Life in all its changes brings risk of trouble, but common thought tends to exaggerate the difficulties of this period and minimize those connected with puberty. Doubtless this common attitude is somewhat influenced by the emotional protest always present when a human being faces the necessity of surrendering a means of satisfaction. In any case, it has been suggested that the dangers connected with the climacteric are less than those associated with the earlier period of sex maturity. Pregnancy, parturition, and the puerperium

involve greater hazards, as the statistics show.<sup>1</sup> Kisch tells us also that it is his opinion that when allowance is made for the natural increase in mortality due to advancing age, no important influence upon the death rate is traceable to disturbances accompanying the climacteric.<sup>2</sup>

The outward expression of the body changes taking place at the climacteric is ordinarily more noticeable in the woman than in the man. There are, however, great differences between women. Some change greatly, especially in secondary sex traits, even growing hair on the face and developing a deeper voice. Others change little, maintaining their feminine traits and physical attractiveness. There is commonly in both men and women a tendency to take on fat, especially about the abdomen. It is not true that there is necessarily in the appearance of the body the evidence of age, which may come later with senescence.

Those who insist upon looking at woman as existing primarily for the perpetuity of the human race find in the menopause the supreme cruelty of nature's decree. The woman, having lived beyond the period of biological purpose, becomes in the words of Nemilov "physiologically superfluous" and her body sinks into a "state of chronic invalidism."<sup>3</sup> Such an interpretation of woman's life utterly fails to do justice to the social career of the modern woman as an individual and greatly exaggerates the physiological significance of the climacteric.

**The onset of the climacteric.** Perhaps nothing more clearly reveals the variability of the experience than do the differences between individual men and individual women in the suddenness of their change of life and the rapidity with which it develops. As a rule it comes more quickly to the woman and she passes through the transition more rapidly, but women are very variable in this respect. Even the time when the climacteric starts differs greatly among women. It is also true, as one would expect, that the physiological and psychic disturbances show similar differences so that no description of what is typical can be safely made.

The menopause of woman usually appears between forty-five and

<sup>1</sup> E. H. Kisch, *The Sexual Life of Women*, p. 341.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> A. Nemilov, *Biological Tragedy of Woman*, p. 184.



fifty but it has been known to come as early as thirty and to be postponed as late as sixty. It is supposed to be influenced by external circumstances such as climate, social conditions, and race, as well as by the idiosyncrasies of the individual. Childlessness and an inactive sexual career are assumed to be conditions that hasten it, while matrimonial happiness, freedom from too frequent childbirth and nursing, are credited with delaying its coming.<sup>4</sup>

In general it is said that as the girl goes through adolescence easily or with much disturbance, so the woman later is apt to have a similar sort of experience as she passes through the climacteric. Bandler declares that this would be uniformly true, if it were not for the accidental happenings and complications during the period between puberty and change of life.<sup>5</sup> There are cases in which incorrect diagnosis has made it seem that the menopause was being postponed, when, as a matter of fact, the patient was suffering from periodic hemorrhages that had no relation to ovulation.<sup>6</sup> There is also, as one would expect, a considerable variation in the length of time during which the climacteric crisis continues. Tilt states that it lasts approximately a year.<sup>7</sup> Kisch found that the menopause change took two or three years, on the average.<sup>8</sup> It must be noticed that there is a distinction between the term climacteric and menopause. The latter means the cessation of menstruation while the other describes the duration of the period which is known as the change of life. The woman may have disturbances long before menstruation leaves and she may have trouble after this has happened. The climacteric may be separated into three periods, the premenopausal, the menopausal, and the postmenopausal.<sup>9</sup>

Although climate, race, and heredity influence a woman's climacteric experience, good hygienic and social conditions contribute beneficially to the experience.<sup>10</sup> Many women through ignorance, lack of interest, lack of self-control or on account of social situations that are unfavorable to wholesome living, enter upon the climacteric unneces-

<sup>4</sup> J. Tenenbaum, *The Riddle of Sex*, p. 47.

<sup>5</sup> S. W. Bandler, *The Endocrines*, pp. 166-67.

<sup>6</sup> G. Maranon, *The Climacteric*, p. 114.

<sup>7</sup> Tilt, *The Change of Life in Health and Disease* (see G. Maranon, *op. cit.*, p. 102).

<sup>8</sup> E. H. Kisch, *op. cit.*, p. 375.

<sup>9</sup> G. Maranon, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

<sup>10</sup> E. H. Kisch, *op. cit.*, p. 352.

sarily handicapped, and we assume their passage to be stormier than was needful.

**Body changes.** It is neither necessary nor expedient for the layman to have any detailed knowledge of the body changes that are associated with the climacteric experience of men and women. The alterations that occur are progressive and spread over a considerable period of time. There is a gradual atrophy of physical structure which puts an end to reproduction and eventually to sex experience. In the case of the woman the most important change is that which appears in the ovaries, which gradually diminish in size and wither away until only a remnant is left.<sup>11</sup> This most spectacular change is illustrative of the general reconstruction of the woman's body in accord with the passing of former sex and reproductive activity. Similar changes occur in the man, but they are milder in form.<sup>12</sup>

Emphasis needs to be put on the fact that the climacteric does not represent, as does disease, the degeneration of the body but its reconstruction. It is true that the transformation is an expression of change and clearly indicates that one volume in the life history of the individual must be closed. But however this may be regretted, it deserves to be thought of as a normal happening in the human life cycle and not to be regarded as evidence of something pathological. The transition necessarily offers opportunity for untoward happenings in the body life, of which, in the case of women, fibroid tumors and cancer are most serious, while in men troubles of prostatic origin are perhaps most prominent.

It would be an advantage to men passing through the climacteric if they more commonly understood the likelihood of this disturbance of the prostate gland. They would be quicker to recognize the symptoms such as pain in the back, the feeling of pressure or any apparent bladder trouble, and by going earlier to the physician for help would be saved much discomfort. The possibility of such an occurrence should be kept in mind by men who have reached the age of fifty.

Just as the structural changes are less pronounced in men than in women during the climacteric there is a corresponding advantage for the male in the amount of severity of functional disturbances accompanying the experience. Because of this, greater attention should be given the effect of the climacteric upon women, but again the

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 358.

<sup>12</sup> G. Maranon, *op. cit.*, p. 351.

reader must keep in mind that the purpose of this discussion is to assist men and women in making matrimonial adjustment and not to give detailed information concerning a matter which in its diagnostic aspects belongs to the science of medicine. If it were not true that the climacteric influenced the relationships of marriage, therefore needing to be anticipated, and is influenced as to its severity or lightness by the previous sex and family practices of men and women, it would have no just place in this volume.

It is true that the popular literature which attempts to help those who marry concentrates upon the earlier experiences of matrimony and seldom gives any consideration to an experience which is inevitable for every man and woman who is not prematurely withdrawn by death from the eventualities of later life. The best preparation for meeting the unusual strain of the climacteric period is wholesome sex hygiene during the preceding years. But no satisfactory program of domestic adjustment can leave out a consideration of so critical an experience as the climacteric means to both the man and the woman.

A considerable part of the emotional disturbances that in a proportion of cases appear during this transitional stage come from the fact that the change is not foreseen and even at times not correctly understood. As a consequence there is no readiness to deal with the unexpected event, and opportunity to furl sail before the storm strikes is lost because of inability to forecast the disturbance from which there can be no escape. Here, as in every other problem of domestic adjustment, preparedness helps.

**Body symptoms of the woman's climacteric.** If this were a medical treatise the present topic would deserve extended treatment. It would include an impressive list of body symptoms associated with the climacteric of women, such as nervous, circulatory, digestive, endocrine, and other disturbances. The catalogue of possible troubles would be formidable, appearing to include nearly every sort of affliction, dizziness, nausea, palpitation of the heart, hot flashes, loss of appetite, skin eruption, neuralgia, pain, backache, redness of the skin, and a host of other ailments. The lay reader would get the impression that the passage through the climacteric is likely to be more distressing and certainly more dangerous than a steamer trip across the British Channel during the severest gale. This notion of physiological risk would of course be an exaggeration as a consequence of the lay read-

er's misinterpreting as the normal experience a summary of the different pathological conditions possible.

Such an emphasis on the pathology of the climacteric would be mischievous, but, on the other hand, to give no warning of possible physical complications means also creating a wrong impression. As has already been said, most women make the passage safely even though a considerable proportion may have various discomforts as a result of the physical disturbance, but it is important that both husband and wife have some knowledge of the possible stress and complications that may come to the woman during this period. It is one of the opportunities that marriage presents for any hardships that husband or wife meets to be lightened by the sympathy and assistance of the other. We shall soon be concerned with psychic symptoms of the woman's climacteric, but these cannot be accurately interpreted unless it be realized by both wife and husband that they are associated with body disturbances and are no more to be thought of as faults or failures of self-control than is seasickness during a channel passage.

There is one matter that does need special emphasis, and that is the wisdom of a careful checking up of any bleeding or any suggestion of tumorous or cancerous growth anywhere in the body. Any hemorrhage, however faint, or "spotting" of blood after intercourse, should have immediate and accurate diagnosis. There was a time when it was taken for granted that some bleeding was characteristic of the climacteric experience of women. This was followed by an era when the gynecologist attempted to impress upon women the danger of not investigating even slight bleeding because so often it marked the presence of a cancerous condition, the cure of which depended upon its being recognized at the earliest possible moment. This resulted, as one would expect, in exaggeration by many intelligent lay people and the notion became rather common that every case of bleeding suggested a benign or malignant tumor.

The present teaching of medicine is that there are various causes for both scanty and excessive bleeding, but that any case, with no regard to the quantity of the hemorrhage, should have careful diagnosis, that the possibility of a tumorous condition may be eliminated. It is wrong to assume that medicine insists that all bleeding during the climacteric means a tumor. It is imperative, nevertheless, that no woman who has any sort of hemorrhage, unusually irregular



menstruation or excessive flow, a newly developed growth, or anything suspicious, take refuge in the thought that it may not be important, for the only sensible and safe thing is an immediate diagnosis. In presenting these facts it may be difficult to steer the reader away from the two extremes of reckless indifference and morbid fear, but intelligent interpretation of the facts leads not to morbid imagination but to a wise use of the diagnostic resources of modern medicine.

**The psychic symptoms of the woman's climacteric.** Husband and wife need also to have a realization of the possibility of psychical disturbances during the period of the woman's change of life, that the family routine may be adjusted to the new circumstances. When we come to the psychic symptoms of woman's experience, we find a larger opportunity for the family itself directly to contribute help that will lessen the load that the wife may have placed upon her. There is special need of every member of the family seeing the problems involved as symptomatic of the readjustment of body and life forced upon the wife and mother. When the disturbances that come to her are viewed by other members of the family as more or less willful and blameworthy character-faults, cruelty is added to the load that is already excessive. The fact is that the difficulties of many wives are utterly misunderstood by the other members of the family, including the husband, until such a serious situation arises as to require outside help, and then the family learns the true situation.

No one will fail in sympathy for the woman passing through psychic disturbances if there be a true conception of what is actually happening. No part of the woman's body has more to contend with as the change of life goes on than her nervous system. There results a general instability, influenced of course in its degree by the previous condition of the woman, including without doubt hereditary and social circumstances.

Undoubtedly the disturbances associated with the climacteric are in the case of many women aggravated by failure to make adjustment to the new circumstances. There is need of slowing up activity and protecting oneself as far as possible from emotional stress. It is a period that calls for conservation of energy and the wisest hygienic program possible. Instead of recognizing this the majority of women meet the experience with fear and seek medical counsel only when symptoms are painfully distressing or some marked deviation from

the normal excites alarm. In view of the prevailing ignorance and as a consequence of lack of judgment on the part of wives and husbands when the former start their passage through the climacteric it is reasonable to suppose that a great part of the suffering and the risk associated with the experience result from the faulty program adopted rather than from the body changes themselves. Robinson tells us that there is no time in the woman's life when the husband's sympathy and support can count more.<sup>13</sup>

Robinson also believes that much of the suffering experienced by women in the climacteric is the result of erroneous ideas.<sup>14</sup> He says that women suppose, unless they have been informed to the contrary, that with the menopause their life as a woman ceases and they become a sort of neutral being, neither man nor woman. They assume that they are no longer attractive to their husbands or to any other man and become depressed at having lost all their charm. He insists that not only does the woman still possess her womanly qualities, in spite of her loss of power of reproduction, but that with the menopause sex desire does not disappear and that many women are as passionate at sixty as at thirty. There is, of course, a gradual atrophy of the ovaries, uterus, and the rest of woman's reproductive mechanism, but this is a slow and gradual process rather than an abrupt change as many women suppose. Ellis also calls attention to the persistence of the sexual impulse in women after the menopause.<sup>15</sup> He notes that there have been few systematic observations regarding this fact. He quotes from an American investigator, Bloom, who found in a study of four hundred cases that in some instances the sexual impulse persisted into a very advanced age. In one instance a woman of seventy who was twenty years beyond the menopause had recently married and testified that her sex desire was stronger than it had been before the menopause.

Robie adds his testimony to that of Freud and others that it is not uncommon for women to experience a marked increase of libido during the climacteric. He believes that most of the neuroses that develop during the menopause are a consequence of an emotional struggle resulting from shame in finding that sex feeling and erotic

<sup>13</sup> W. J. Robinson, *Woman, Her Sex and Love Life*, p. 132.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 130-33.

<sup>15</sup> Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, Vol. III. "Analysis of the Sexual Impulse," p. 11.

thoughts have become more clamorous at the very time that it was assumed that they would pass from consciousness. He charges the disturbance to ignorance of the fact that the climacteric often acts contrary to what is popularly supposed to be true, and that these women, having struggled against the idea of sex all through their life, believing erotic thoughts and recognition of sex desire to be blameworthy, are upset by their unexpected difficulty in keeping sex out at a time when they are physiologically disturbed. Much of their trouble comes from unpreparedness. They are ignorant of the meaning of the climacteric and have no background for understanding the travail of sex that is occurring in their own experience.<sup>16</sup>

Kisch assures us that the woman who has had a normal, happy marital adjustment and has borne several children whom she has nursed has a longer sex life than unmarried women, women early widowed, or women who have been barren. He also asserts that women who have a hard life of toil devoid of social advantages are penalized by a shorter period of sex activity than the more fortunate women who have enjoyed good health, and that those who have been favored with a strong body also have a longer sexual life than those who have been weakly and have never enjoyed physical vigor.<sup>17</sup>

Van de Velde believes that the early passing of the woman's sex activity or its late prolongation is influenced by the interest and attention she has received from her husband in the pre-climacteric days as well as during the period itself.<sup>18</sup>

There are those so fortunate as to meet the stress with little or no psychic reaction while others are temporarily driven into serious mental suffering. Between these two extremes is the average woman who suffers some degree of irritability and mental disturbance. A description of the expression of the underlying nervous readjustment which includes both the autonomic and the voluntary nervous systems suggests the mental symptoms sometimes appearing in pregnancy. There may be a decided change of disposition, restlessness replacing former content, or proneness to anger and fault-finding supplanting the one-time patience and self-control. There may be moodiness and capricious changes of feeling. Depression and despondency also are not uncommon among those seriously disturbed.

<sup>16</sup> W. F. Robie, *Rational Sex Ethics*, pp. 270-71.

<sup>17</sup> E. H. Kisch, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

<sup>18</sup> Th. H. Van de Velde, *Ideal Marriage*, pp. 111-112.

In the extreme cases of melancholia we see a genuine mental illness which is likely to appear hopeless to the lay observer. Even in these cases temporary disturbances associated with the climacteric have so large a factor in determining the psychosis that, once the change is completed, there may be full return to normal experience. There are now available certain preparations of hormones which are believed helpful to those women whose passing of the climacteric is nervously trying.

Our understanding of the causes and significance of mental disturbance in the climacteric has greatly increased during the last decade as we have come to know more fully the complicated character of the sex life of woman and the important rôle played in it by the endocrine glands. We now are beginning to realize that the sex life of both male and female is not localized but in a real sense extends so widely as to have a definite influence upon the psychic life. Maranon tells us that all human activity, from cellular to mental endeavor, discloses the influence of sex.<sup>19</sup> As the woman's sex life is more complicated than the man's, including a much greater significance in the realm of secondary sex characteristics, it follows that the readjustment of her sex and reproductive functions and their final disappearance necessarily disturb her more than the corresponding changes disturb the man.

The reason why the climacteric may bring such an upheaval in personality is the fundamental readjustment forced upon the entire organism, in which sex permeates the whole. The former edifice not only has to have alteration but much of it must be torn down and a new kind of building constructed. To complete the picture we need to think of the organism as the essential basis of the personality itself.

Clearly the psychic disturbance characteristic of the climacteric cannot be thought of as an isolated experience resulting altogether from the storm and stress period. Just as the sex life in general and the emotional character as a whole are products of a connected chain of happenings from the earliest days of infancy forward, so this expression of psychic tension during the climacteric is definitely related to preceding events. Since the underlying nervous system is involved, the psychic traits, especially those that are emotional, are products of untoward conditioning influences that have made the personality

<sup>19</sup> G. Maranon, *op. cit.*, p. 191.



what it is. A special opportunity is provided for the revival of any kind of emotional conflict which has gone on throughout the years or which at the time of occurrence left a predisposition toward its recurrence.

Brill gives an interesting suggestion of a kind of conflict which would be likely to come to the surface during the climacteric period, in the case of women who have had a long protest against the feminine rôle that nature placed upon them. When made seriously conscious for the last time of their sex characteristics which have always seemed to them a burden compared with the more desirable destiny of men, they relieve long pent-up antagonism, and there comes forth a serious overflow of emotion.<sup>20</sup>

Since the emotional disturbance so often associated with the climacteric is clearly tied up with the general sex life of the individual, we should expect to see definite disturbances of sex feeling, and in many instances we do, but when they appear they must not be regarded merely as expressions of conscious sex life for they are basically related to the endocrine reactions taking place during the period. Maranon summarizes them as follows: (a) Exaggerated lessening of sex feeling; (b) sexual melancholia; (c) increase in sex feeling; and (d) tendency toward inversion.<sup>21</sup> The form the disturbance takes undoubtedly has some connection with the emotional episodes of the earlier career. Kisch calls attention to the need of keeping in mind the relations between an increase in the intensity of sexual desire and the general visceral hyperesthesias at this period of life.<sup>22</sup>

**The artificial menopause.** Since it is sometimes necessary for the health of the woman to bring about artificially a cessation of the power of reproduction, there is need of a brief discussion of the artificial or surgical climacteric. The castration of domestic animals has long been a common practice among farmers and those interested in animal husbandry. Horses, cattle, poultry, and dogs are the animals most often unsexed. As a rule it is the male that is castrated. The operation brings about definite changes in the disposition and in the body of the animal. Thus we find a considerable variation in both body structure and disposition between the bull and the ox.

As we should expect, castration, when performed upon the human,

<sup>20</sup> A. A. Brill, *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. XI, No. 5, p. 951.

<sup>21</sup> G. Maranon, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

<sup>22</sup> E. H. Kisch, *op. cit.*, p. 421.

has definite consequences resembling the natural climacteric.<sup>23</sup> Maranon tells us that the nearer the age of the patient is to the normal time of change of life, the closer are the symptoms that occur in castration to the conditions of the climacteric. In women castrated in youth the results associated with ovarian insufficiency appear after castration and then largely disappear. When the time comes when the menopause would spontaneously arise, disturbances appear, but less than otherwise would be the case because of the absence of the earlier influences of ovarian sufficiency.<sup>24</sup> When the climacteric is suddenly produced in the young woman with none of the gradual change normally associated with the progressive development of the climacteric, the symptoms of so sudden a cessation of the normal activities are more intense than what is to be expected under the usual circumstances.

The surgeon at the present time is more conservative than once was true in deciding to bring about an artificial menopause, because of the greater insight that medical science has gained in recent years regarding the secondary consequences of the removal of the ovaries. The question whether an operation should be performed is no longer decided by considering merely the local conditions that would indicate the advantages of castration. It is also recognized that the woman's previous history and her present psychic condition will greatly influence the amount of disturbance associated with the operation. Kraepelin in his *Clinical Psychiatry* suggests the earlier attitudes when he tells us that removal of the ovaries when slightly diseased or even normal has proved in cases of hysteria of temporary benefit but that the general conviction is that such operations are likely to do more harm than good.<sup>25</sup>

**The masculine climacteric.** Although man's change of life is less spectacular than woman's, this must not conceal the fact that he also must accept the verdict of nature and adjust his life to new conditions. There are authorities who deny the existence of anything in man's life similar to the menopause, but the prevailing opinion is that the male also passes through a critical period as sex vitality wanes and finally disappears.<sup>26</sup> In order to do justice to the man's experience,

<sup>23</sup> G. Maranon, *op. cit.*, p. 328.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 329.

<sup>25</sup> A. R. Diefendorf, ed., Second Edition, p. 474.

<sup>26</sup> G. Maranon, *op. cit.*, p. 349.

it must be thought of as a transition in a life program and not a mere local body change.

Man's passage from maturity to old age is less violent than woman's and not so clearly expressed by alterations in body structure. The reproductive function does not, of course, disappear without body changes, but they are not so noticeable as those of woman and less clearly distinguishable in their secondary effects from the characteristics of old age. There is, nevertheless, the same readjustment of body life, even though less violent and abrupt, as the man loses his testicular sufficiency, just as in a more marked way the wife must readjust to her loss of ovarian sufficiency. As with women, so with men, we find a variability between individuals as to the time when they enter the climacteric and the effect that it has upon them.

The male body commonly continues the power of producing spermatozoa up to fifty and sixty years of age and even in some cases beyond seventy. This, however, does not mean that there is no lessening of the reproductiveness until so late, for there may be changes in the quality and quantity of the spermatic fluid even though the individual is not sex exhausted, since the male sex life is dependent upon the secretion from the gonads, and these become less active with the increasing years, causing the sex power to wane. This process may appear as early as forty or as late as sixty. Tenenbaum tells us that bachelors and widowers are quicker to show this decline of sex vigor than married men.<sup>27</sup>

The lessening of man's sexual impulse comes in a more gradual manner than in the case of woman, and with less shock and emotional disturbance. Man is favored apparently not only because of the more gradual onset of the climacteric and the fact that his sex life is less consequential and complex within the body-life as a whole, but also because he commonly has developed greater outside interests and finds in his profession, business and other masculine outlets a relief she less easily obtains as a traditional mother and housekeeper. The wife's physical and psychical ordeal frequently coincides with the lessening of her responsibilities as a mother, so that at two points she feels a void. Here appears the therapeutic advantage possessed by the woman who has widened her life in proportion as the growing up of her children has relieved her from household duties.

<sup>27</sup> J. Tenenbaum, *The Riddle of Sex*, p. 52.

The melancholy from which some women suffer as they make the critical passage is rare in men.<sup>28</sup> It is quite otherwise with the coming of sexual impotency out of season. This shakes the emotional life of the younger man, not at all prepared for so sudden a blow.<sup>29</sup>

Even though man's mental reaction to the climacteric may appear less significant than woman's, it must not be inferred that the experience presents for him no psychic problem. He may struggle to re-create his sex life which is largely or fully gone, because sex desire still persists. This may lead him into acts of folly such as we see when the man of seventy marries or falls in love with a very young woman, or he may develop trends toward sex perversity or anti-social conduct. Although these need to be recognized in justice to the man who is the victim of emotional weakness, they do not in this connection require detailed treatment.

In this connection it must be remembered that old men suffering from arteriosclerosis with its accompanying high blood pressure run grave risk during coitus, and as a consequence their marrying normally sexed women much younger than themselves often leads to their death.<sup>30</sup> Robinson reports such a case.<sup>31</sup> The man was fifty-six and to outward appearances in good health. He had been a widower for ten years and was thinking of marrying a woman who was thirty. The danger was not in this difference of age but in the fact that upon examination Dr. Robinson discovered that the man had a blood pressure which indicated that for him remarriage was dangerous. He was strongly counseled not to marry but refused to follow the physician's advice. He said he would rather live five years with the young woman than twenty-five without her. He married and his death from apoplexy occurred three months later.

#### Case 50

My sex life has been a stormy one from the beginning, and I look back upon childhood and youth as periods of stress from which I have luckily escaped. So far as was possible I tried to suppress in childhood and youth even the thought of sex but did not succeed in doing more than to bring a persistent conflict between what seemed to me a lower and a

<sup>28</sup> G. Maranon, *op. cit.*, p. 364.

<sup>29</sup> M. Osnato, "The Psychology and Psychotherapy of the Impotent," *The Urologic and Cutaneous Review*, August, 1929, p. 531.

<sup>30</sup> Th. H. Van de Veldé, *Ideal Marriage*, p. 306.

<sup>31</sup> W. J. Robinson, *American Sex and Marriage Problems*, pp. 405-06.



higher life, for which there was no satisfactory settlement. I married late but happily, and my only child was born when I was nearing the time when sex would disappear. The event, I suspect, came earlier to me than is usual, but it approached so gradually that I hardly realized what was happening. Once I awoke to the fact, I had a feeling of relief rather than any unwillingness to give up my former possession. Sex had made me so much trouble and had so constantly intruded upon the work that I was doing, that it was a considerable relief to know that this disturbance was over. I did regret that we had only one child and now recognize that we must have had a low fertility from the start. Possibly, as my reaction suggests, I have been undersexed, but as I think back to the struggle associated with sex in my earlier years and youth, my personal conviction is that I must have been at least as strongly sexed as the average man. Fortunately, my wife is of my own age and had already experienced the change of life before I began to enter upon mine.

In no period of man's life does foreknowledge prove more helpful. Wisdom calls for a sublimating of this revival of sex as soon as it becomes conscious. This is not difficult for the man who has built a life of wide contacts and numerous interests. In somewhat different form his problem is similar to that of the young man who subordinates and keeps under sex desire that he may give his attention to educational preparation for his profession. This sublimation is not so easily accomplished by men whose existence has gone forward on a lower level and to whom sex has been one of the few zestful motivations of life. Their Indian Summer sexuality once again gives meaning to their barren experience, and it is not strange that in some instances they become captive to the newly awakened passion and are led into anti-social cravings and practices. The need of recognizing the causal factor in such behavior and the folly of treating it with conventional harshness was impressed upon me years ago by the following case.

#### *Case 51*

J. A. was a man nearly eighty. He had been a hard-working, unskilled laborer and was at this time living by himself in a condition of poverty. Near him was a neighbor who often gave assistance in the form of food and who frequently allowed her daughter of nine years to be with the old man. One day the child complained to her mother that J. A. had fondled her and frightened her. Undoubtedly the man had shown unnatural sex interest in the child. It is also clear that he had done her no harm, having been saved from this, I imagine, by the child's reaction. Instead of

announcing the occurrence to the village, which would have made it at once a matter of gossip that would have led to its exaggeration, the mother sought counsel as to what could best be done. She was an intelligent woman and readily came to realize the physiological basis behind the old man's temptation. It was decided to warn him but chiefly to depend upon keeping the child away from him. The father had a talk with the man who frankly confessed his impulse and his shame. He was quite willing to coöperate by keeping away from the child. Little was said to the latter but enough explanation was given to take away the menace of the experience and to enlist her coöperation in the policy of the household. As a consequence of this program J. A. was never tempted to another offense and died respected in his neighborhood in accord with his reputation as a decent, law-abiding citizen.

**The art of growing old.** It is apparent that the climacteric brings to both husband and wife the larger problem of adjustment to old age. Much good counsel has been given by writers who attempt to show how one can grow old graciously. When it comes to the practicing of these precepts it soon appears that the strategy that brings success deals not with this period as an isolated event but with a greater matter—the whole life program. Once infancy has passed, no epoch of the individual's life stands by itself. When serious domestic strain comes forth as a consequence of the ending of sex adjustment, husband and wife must confess that they have too narrowly built their fellowship and have become too dependent upon a single aspect of their association. The domestic adjustment has been an incomplete one and evidence of this appears as the sex powers are swept aside. On the other hand those who have multiplied together common interests, who have shared life as a gladsome adventure and as a struggle in which each has reënforced the other, have so fundamentally joined and so completely fused their two lives that neither individual staggers when the decree of nature is recognized.

Every experience is good in season, because there are always positive qualities that more than offset losses that have occurred. This is true of old age just as surely as it is of youth, but it is a bewildering experience when the husband and wife are thrust into the new circumstances of old age with slender preparation, like the traveler who is driven into a foreign land with little baggage for his comfort.

The disappearance of sex leaves no domestic fellowship empty where there have been other interests than the erotic. Children, friends, rec-

reaction, hobbies, intellectual activities, social service are some of the interests that provide zest and compensation to those who have no choice regarding the abandoning of the sex function of marriage. At no time is it good to attempt to anticipate conditions that belong to a later season. Likewise, it is life's failure that makes any stage of human experience seem empty so that one covets earlier circumstances. Much of the dread of the climacteric comes from an unhealthy effort to continue out of season sex desire.

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## CHAPTER XXX

### DIVORCE

**Why divorce?** It may at first strike some readers as strange to find a chapter discussing divorce in this text. One of the facts, however, that any interpreter of American family life has to face is the large number of persons who fail to find happiness in marriage and who seek divorce. The significance of the present situation cannot be ignored in any book on preparation for marriage. Moreover it is not only maladjustment in marriage that leads to divorce; lack of understanding of the significance of divorce itself frequently entices the individual to a solution that would not be chosen if he could know in advance the full meaning of his decision.

In the present discussion there is no need of repeating the conventional treatment of divorce found in books that deal with it as a major social problem. The purpose of the present chapter is specific. Divorce concerns us because it is a frequent ending of thwarted marriage relationships and it is a matter about which information should be given to those who may later have the misfortune of facing the practical decision whether or not to look to divorce as a means of solving domestic conflict.

**Marriage hazard.** No one doubts that there is a great deal of domestic misery in the United States. This is in part expressed by our high divorce rate, but without question there are a good many families that in spite of unhappiness do not for one reason or another seek divorce. Few doubt also that the marriage relationship receives a sharper testing under prevailing modern conditions than was formerly true. The reasons for this are many, but among them are a keener sense of individuality, higher expectations in marriage, a lessened tolerance of unfavorable or unpleasant circumstances, greater nervous tension as a consequence of the complexity and intensity of the social environment, a lessening of the economic motive for marrying and continuing to live together, and the fading away of a public attitude toward divorce, which in the past coerced individuals who



otherwise would have sought relief from ties that had become repugnant.

Perhaps the situation can be best summarized by saying that the time has come in our social evolution when marriage to be successful has to contribute directly to the individual's satisfaction, whereas once merely being married proved an advantage for economic and social survival. Those who must find fulfillment or defeat in the relationship itself come to the experience with higher standards and more complex demands than was commonly true in former periods. There is a sense then in which it is fair to say that divorce is the social recognition of the marriage hazard.

This, however, is not the theory of the law, which still mostly emphasizes the idea that divorce is a penalty, that is, a remedy given only to an innocent person against a husband or wife who has been guilty of some wrong.<sup>1</sup> This notion has come down to us from the ecclesiastical courts, and it registers what was once a well-established conviction that a husband or wife deserved to be free from an evil spouse. This would not be the theory of our legislature were our laws now to be passed *de novo* and to be reflective of present attitudes. Although the court, at least in theory, still needs to fix blame in order to permit divorce, people rather generally think of divorce as a means of breaking an unwanted marriage relationship. To them divorce is a means of escape provided by the state for those who cannot find happiness in marriage and who insist upon being freed from mismating. Thus popular thought conceives of divorce as the pragmatic recognition that marriage has a hazard which society cannot wisely attempt to ignore.

From no quarter is there denial of the large percentage of failure among those who marry in this country, but there are uncompromising differences of opinion as to the meaning of this fact and the policy which the state should follow in attempting to meet the situation. Those who for moral or ecclesiastical reasons oppose divorce or at least regard it as an unfortunate political necessity in accord with sound public policy, do not believe that divorce should be provided as a means of recognizing the hazard of human mating. On the left there is another group that questions the right of the state to interfere with the right they claim for every individual to break, with the consent

<sup>1</sup> C. G. Vernier, *American Family Laws*, Vol. II, p. 9.

of his spouse, the marriage ties. To them marriage is a personal agreement which should be dissolved by mutual consent, and divorce should be had as easily as marriage; and indeed most of those belonging to this group would be more exacting in regard to conditions for marrying than for the getting of a divorce. The great majority of Americans are not committed to either of these extremes but look for divorce as the only practical way by which the state can end a relationship which is in fact injurious to both husband and wife. To them marriage is both a civil and a personal relationship but one which from its nature cannot be maintained by external social pressure without causing greater evils.

The American divorce situation is confused not only because the states have their own independent laws and decisions concerning divorce, leading to all sorts of inconsistencies in a population as mobile as ours, where a multitude of people find themselves every working day passing from the jurisdiction of one state to another, which may mean for them the status of legal marriage on one side of a state line and of illegal bigamy on the other, but also because our legislation continues a theory contrary to our mores and attempts to grant or deny divorce on the former basis of penalty while common thought insists that divorce is a remedy for domestic incompatibility.

When the law maker encounters the practical task of divorce legislation two motives arise which are difficult to harmonize. On the one hand there is the desire to do everything that can be done to protect marriage and to keep those who enter upon matrimony from regarding their mutual contract lightly. Part of the stability of the state comes from responsible family life, and anything that encourages careless living or irresponsible domestic relationships lessens social security.

From this attitude comes the attempt, not to make divorce a punishment, but to make it difficult to get. It is felt by those who have this attitude toward divorce that unless it is made difficult to get the seriousness and habits that make for success in marriage will not have the encouragement they deserve. How little disposition there is to penalize appears in the fact that even when adultery is the basis for divorce and is a punishable offense according to the law of the state, rarely is there any attempt to bring criminal charge against the individual who, according to court record, is guilty of adultery.

On the other hand there is in the mind of the legislator a realization

that even the best meaning of people often do find it impossible to live together happily; and that for a multitude of less conscientious people marriage may result in disappointment, and that inability to end the relationship not only aggravates their unhappy situation but also injures their character and may tempt them to vice. It becomes a matter of public policy to recognize the existing facts and to provide divorce for individuals who insist upon a way out of their predicament.

These two attitudes, added to differences between our mores and our legal theory and the variations of statutory law and court decisions concerning divorces in our forty-eight states, present a situation of confusion and inconsistency in divorce legislation unduplicated at any other point of our legal system, and such as cannot be found in any other part of the world, civilized or savage.

To some extent the differences between the states reflect a genuine variation in ideas and practices, as appears, for example, when we contrast the more liberal legislation of the Pacific states with the conservatism of the Southeast.

In some degree a liberal state provides a safety valve which relieves pressure in those states that have relatively repressive laws. For example, if residents of New York State had no way of being divorced except by strict fulfillment of the conditions imposed by the law of that commonwealth, undoubtedly the demands for more liberal grounds for divorce would be both insistent and intense. It happens, however, that those who are most in command of the means of expression of public opinion enjoy economic circumstances that permit them to establish legal residence elsewhere, if necessary as far away as Nevada or Paris. As a result there is no effective agitation for more liberal divorce laws and the *status quo* is defended by those who are opposed to divorce in any form or who fear that more liberal legislation will encourage a social evil that society may be forced to recognize but should discourage in every way possible.

**Lessening the marriage hazard.** Even those who believe that it is sound social policy for the state under certain circumstances to release the badly adjusted from their matrimonial ties regard with misgiving the large number of divorces yearly granted in the United States. Some of these would change the divorce legislation and attempt to lessen the problem by making it more difficult to get a divorce. In recent years an increasing proportion of those who think of divorce

as a necessary evil have turned their attention more and more to the lessening of the marriage hazard. To them this seems a more positive program and a safer social policy. They believe that only those men and women who are unusually strong in their moral conviction that a divorce is opposed to Christian teaching can be expected to meet a serious domestic incompatibility by any other method than that of divorce. Even those who believe that divorce is always sinful join heartily with others in the emphasis upon programs that are intended to lessen the hazards of marriage.

Any treatment of the hazards of human mating at this point would mean retraveling the discussions of this book. Although this text is not primarily concerned with conditions that tend toward divorce, its positive emphasis upon wholesome domestic adjustment and a rational dealing with the problems of matrimonial association necessarily leads to the attempt through educational preparation to decrease the marriage hazard. As soon as divorce is recognized as a symptomatic evil, a way of escape provided by society for marriage failure, a need of a constructive policy for helping husbands and wives to achieve matrimonial success becomes clear. Attention moves away from divorce as the fundamental problem and concentrates upon a positive program for the increase of domestic happiness.

Marriage performs no miracles. At best it offers the means of achieving a satisfying human mating. At worst it uncovers the hopelessness of two individuals finding together a union of affection. Legislation also has its limits. Law can do no more than provide favorable circumstances for a man and woman to work out their domestic destiny. One cannot be legislated into good adjustment nor can the law create in any individual traits of character that permit him to reach spiritual compatibility with another human being.

The law also strikes a barrier when it attempts to regulate the conditions of entering marriage. Even if the law maker could be so wise as to find the prerequisites for successful mating he would still hesitate to go far in restricting the right to marry. The task of the state is a practical one, since marriage has developed as a political and social method of regulating human mating. If the barriers against entering marriage are built too high great evils quickly follow. Not only does public opinion refuse to back up drastic legislation, but a considerable part of sex relationship, the very thing the state attempts to control for the best interest of the citizenship, takes an illicit and



irresponsible form. Thus it soon becomes evident that the best help that can come from the legislator in dealing with the divorce evil is the indirect assistance that follows every effort made to mature the judgment and strengthen the character of those who marry.

**Failure follows routine testing.** There cannot be a premarriage status which provides the testing of compatibility that comes out of the everyday contact of husband and wife. There is no substitute for marriage because any other status of relationship is different. Failure may appear in any of these associations, ranging from courtship to an experimental union, but the fact that success may be had in any one of these does not guarantee that the final climax in the relationship of a man and woman, marriage, will likewise succeed. This test is made under different circumstances amid the wear and tear of a relationship to which each of them feels himself committed. Incompatibility shows itself in the normal everyday contact of intimate association and only under such circumstances can it be discovered that the two individuals are not well mated.

If incompatibility always appeared in the early days of marriage, society might take seriously some sort of matrimonial probation, but even when the risk shows itself early, it is rarely certain whether the trouble is a part of necessary readjustments or a dangerous trend which if not curbed will make trouble, or an inevitable division for which there is no hope. Time renders the verdict, but not until each individual has expressed clearly the traits of character that mar or make possible domestic fellowship. It is not the difficulty that occurs but the reaction of each person concerned which finally determines the issue of their union.

As a consequence of these facts there is no certain way of eliminating at the beginning all the hazards present in any particular mating or even of knowing positively whether the marriage will or will not be successful. Nevertheless in a considerable proportion of cases the neutral observer feels confident of any particular couple that they will or will not succeed. Prophecy has not always proved accurate but it bears testimony to the fact that there are personality traits that make a contemplated marriage dubious, and different traits that promise happiness. Obviously the building of propitious personality traits reduces the hazard just as certainly as does constructive social legislation.

In primitive society there is a freer opportunity to attempt premar-

riage experiment. This is made possible by the simplicity of the social situation and the different sex standard. Their attitude is as much in harmony with their social condition as ours is with present civilization. It is just impossible for us to fall back upon their practices unless we strip ourselves of the characteristics of modern social culture.

**Character testing and divorce.** One plays for high stakes in marriage. As a consequence, the inherent substance of personality receives a severe testing and all the psychopathic mechanisms associated with personality weakness become uncovered in the relationship in which character traits determine success even more than in any other association. Marriage supremely tests emotional growth. Infantile reactions, emotional conflict, fixation, complexes, daydreaming, rationalization, guilt feeling, morbid fear, and the feeling of inferiority are some of the emotional traits that may undermine domestic happiness. Deeper than these there may be a substratum of neurotic constitutional weakness which destroys the promise of intimate association.

**Helping those in trouble.** When divorce is looked upon as an expression of domestic failure it becomes clear that repressive legislation cannot prove an effective remedy. If law forbids divorce, as is true in South Carolina, it merely blocks the unhappy couple from obtaining legal release from their bonds and remarrying. Even those who consider this the best policy that the state can maintain are not satisfied with such a negative program. It is recognized that the only security for the institution of marriage must come from the general achievement of success by those who enter matrimony. The influence of law is considerable but most especially in its indirect effect upon family life. Every enactment that helps to build up wholesome social standards as they affect home life lessens the danger of divorce. For example, taxation and the administration of public funds are primary influences acting upon family life since the cost and efficiency of government concern the family.

It is evident, however, that a wholesome social environment does not by itself guarantee the happiness of all who mate. There is an individual aspect of the problem that is distinct from the social situation. Unquestionably the best way of lessening divorce at this point is through preparation for marriage. Recognition of the need of this is growing rapidly and as a consequence various educational

agencies, schools, colleges, universities, and churches are beginning to experiment in providing instruction for marriage and for parenthood.

Education should prove the most constructive way of increasing domestic satisfaction and lessening the hazards of marriage, but the most efficient and available education of which we can conceive cannot be expected to eliminate all the risks of marriage failure, since a part of domestic trouble will always originate from personality defects that cannot be prevented merely by giving preparatory instruction. For these persons there must be provided also special assistance by those expert in dealing with problems of marital dissatisfaction.

At present help is coming from two sources and there is every reason to suppose that soon these methods of getting help by those in marriage difficulty will be widely known and largely used. One is the assistance provided by the family counselor. The men and women who are performing this service are not members of any one profession although it is probable that the psychiatrist most often deals with domestic maladjustment. Psychologists, sociologists, physicians, educators, as well as psychiatrists and ministers, are acting as marital advisors and little by little are developing what in due time may be a distinct profession. It is not entirely new, for doctors especially, for a hundred years or more, have been looked to for advice by people experiencing matrimonial difficulty. The difference is that the modern counselor is a student of the sciences that have to do with human behavior and treats the problems that come to him in the light of what he knows about human conduct.

There is also a different source for marital assistance developing in the United States which is often designated as a clinic since it is patterned after a medical clinic that utilizes the service of various specialists. The first agency of this sort in this country is known as the Institute of Family Relationships and is directed by Dr. Paul Popenoe at Los Angeles, California.

Having been for some years called upon to give counsel to those in marital difficulty, the author felt the need of establishing some sort of bureau for matrimonial assistance which would permit those in trouble not only to have an objective interpretation but one utilizing the various slants of specialists in the several professions that chiefly deal with problems of human conduct. This means of helping people in marital trouble was advocated in the *Marriage Crisis*, published in

1928, and in earlier writings and speaking. How rapidly this type of service is now developing appears from a recent summary.<sup>2</sup>

No one familiar with problems of human nature will expect the most ideal provision for helping people in domestic difficulty to succeed always in preventing divorce. For that reason it is necessary to consider the various methods of dealing with marital dissatisfaction.

**Annulment.** Divorce puts an end to what has been recognized as a legal status. Annulment is the decision of a court that the marriage never legally existed. In fact the two individuals may have lived for a time in union but their assumed marriage was void and is by official decree destroyed *ab initio*. Annulment may have both a judicial and an ecclesiastical significance. The Roman Catholic Church has developed through the experience of many centuries an elaborate ecclesiastical system to safeguard marriage in accord with its principles and to annul unions with invalidating impediments. Such marriages are regarded not merely as illicit but as null and void.<sup>3</sup> Very recently the Episcopal Church of America has set up machinery for the ecclesiastical annulment of marriage.

Regarding marriage as a civil contract, the law holds that any cause or state of facts which has made the marriage fully or partly invalid from the beginning is proper grounds for annulment. In contrast to this divorce sets aside a marriage for reasons that have come about subsequent to the contracting of a valid union. In some states divorce is made use of to dissolve marriages which are held to have been invalid from the start. The statutes of some states are surprisingly confusing because, though they state the terms under which marriages are held to be voidable, they do not always also affirm their annulment. In such cases the ambiguity has to be clarified by judicial decision. All the fifty-one states and territories of the United States have laws relating to the annulment of marriage. They differ just as does the legislation relating to divorce. Non-fulfillment of the age qualification for marriage and mental incapacity are the two most common grounds for annulment. Thirty-two of the jurisdictions make the former and thirty-one make the latter a sufficient reason for annulling the marriage. The use of force or duress in bringing about

<sup>2</sup> R. P. Bridgman, "Guidance for Marriage and Family Life," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, March, 1932, pp. 144-64.

<sup>3</sup> P. J. Gannon, *Holy Matrimony*, Chap. 4.



the marriage is the basis for annulment in twenty-two states, fraud in twenty-four, impotency in eighteen, bigamous marriages in twenty-one, miscegenation in five states, twenty others declaring such marriages void, while one state makes the existence of some diseases such as epilepsy and venereal disease a specific provision for annulment.<sup>4</sup>

It might seem at first to the layman that there is no practical difference between a legal divorce and an annulment of marriage in those states where a distinction is made, but under certain circumstances there is a difference of considerable practical importance, since in the one case the union is regarded as having had a lawful existence with consequences that persist even though the relationship ceases, while in the other the union was void from the start. In the latter case, for example, children are illegitimate. Another consequence is that communications between husband and wife made after the marriage and prior to the decree are not treated as confidential, as would be true in case of legal marriage, but are freely admissible in evidence.<sup>5</sup>

**Separation.** In cases where husbands and wives are unwilling to continue life together but one or both of them objects to divorce or there is no legal ground for divorce, it would seem a simple solution for them to separate, particularly if they can succeed in the making of an agreement as to their relationship which will commend itself as just. There is, of course, no legal coercion to force the two to live together, but on the other hand their separation will bring them unexpected problems as far as their legal status is concerned. Whatever their motive for separation, the mere fact that they no longer live together does not change their marital status nor, as a rule, influence their legal rights or duties.

In case of children or property, practical legal complications may arise and in their disposition we find again much confusion because of variations between the states. At this writing there are ten states that have legislation relating to separation agreements. The former attitude of the courts regarding separation agreements is well expressed by the following extract from a North Carolina decision.

We do not, however, put the case upon the ground of fraud or imposition on the part of the husband, but upon the broad ground that articles of separation between husband and wife, voluntarily entered into by them,

<sup>4</sup> C. G. Vernier, *American Family Laws*, Vol. I, pp. 239-50.

<sup>5</sup> I. Drummond, *Getting a Divorce*, p. 46.

either in contemplation of or after separation, are against law and public policy, and will not be enforced in this court.<sup>6</sup>

The courts have reversed their former attitudes and are now generally favorable to agreements between husbands and wives who have separated. Vernier tells us that there are only ten states that seem to have express legislation relating to separation agreements between husbands and wives.<sup>7</sup>

The question has arisen whether the wife in case of separation is entitled to maintenance even though there has been no divorce. Contrary to what seems to have been the attitude of common law, American courts have increasingly felt the need of granting greater economic security under such circumstances than women could claim according to the earlier decisions. The following statement of a West Virginia decision reflects this more recent attitude of the courts.

The venue of a suit for maintenance without divorce is in no wise controlled by the statute in relation to jurisdiction in divorce suits. The place of suit is governed by the laws applying to ordinary suits for the vindication of legal or equitable rights. The divorce statutes do not relate to an independent suit for maintenance and cannot control it.<sup>8</sup>

When a man living apart from his wife refuses to contribute to her maintenance and that of her children, there are three methods provided in this country by which his duty may be forced upon him: by divorce with the fixing of alimony; by enforcement of criminal statutes for willful abandonment and non-support; and by decree for separation maintenance. Thirty-nine jurisdictions authorize separation maintenance by statutory enactment and eight establish it by court decision. A decree of separation maintenance does not alter the marital status of husband or wife, affect the right of the wife to the property of the husband, or make it impossible for her later to sue for divorce. The fact of abandonment or separation, whether by agreement or not, has legal significance as a basis for a suit of divorce action regarding the duty of wife, responsibility for the children, and the control and disposition of property. In many states we have criminal statutes to protect wives and children against abandonment, under which action

<sup>6</sup> J. W. Madden, *Cases on Domestic Relations*, p 730; *Collins v. Collins*, 62 N. C. 153 (1867).

<sup>7</sup> C. G. Vernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 467.

<sup>8</sup> J. W. Madden, *op. cit.*, p. 727; *Lang v. Lang et al.* 70 W. Va. (1912).

can be taken against the husband who fails or refuses to meet his obligations to the family.<sup>9</sup>

**Limited divorce.** Limited divorce, generally known as divorce from bed and board, comes to us from the English ecclesiastical courts. It takes away the rights of cohabitation without destroying the status of the two concerned as legally married. The situation has been described in the words of the English court as throwing the parties back upon society in the undefined and dangerous character of a wife without a husband and a husband without a wife.<sup>10</sup> The husband and wife become to each other as unmarried persons, while to outsiders they are still regarded as married. Although Vernier considers that there is no justification for limited divorce, the state of Florida is the only state which by statute forbids it and the trend toward granting this form of divorce appears to be increasing among the fifty-one jurisdictions in the United States.<sup>11</sup> Grounds for this form of divorce show the same variations that we find in the laws relating to absolute divorce.

The following are the most common grounds: Twenty-six jurisdictions recognize desertion as cause; twenty-seven recognize cruelty; seventeen, adultery; seventeen, intoxication; sixteen, non-support; and twelve, imprisonment for the conviction of crime; four recognize insanity as cause, and six, impotence. Students will find a clear summary of the laws of the several states down to 1931 in Drummond's *Getting a Divorce*, Part II. It must be remembered that the statutes are constantly changing and that accurate knowledge of existing laws can only be gained by finding out whether new legislation has been passed.

**Absolute divorce.** The word divorce as commonly used means the absolute breaking of matrimonial ties. The laws and decisions relating to absolute divorce are not only different in the fifty-one jurisdictions of the United States, but the status of divorce itself is frequently most ambiguous because of the unparalleled tangle prevalent in this portion of the legal field. New laws are constantly being passed and decisions rendered, any one of which may complicate the status of divorce for some one who in good faith assumes that his

<sup>9</sup> C. G. Vernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, Part IV, and J. W. Madden, *op. cit.*, Part IV, Chap. 4.

<sup>10</sup> James Kent, *Commentary on American Law*, Vol. II, p. 128. See C. G. Vernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 341.

<sup>11</sup> C. G. Vernier, *op. cit.*, p. 342.

matrimonial status has been dissolved but who, having moved from the state of his original domicile, finds his position in doubt.

The following illustration shows how easily the status of divorce may be complicated. In the Atherton case, the husband and wife married in New York and went at once to Kentucky, which was the home of the husband. Later the wife went to live in New York, leaving her husband. There she sued for separation on the ground of cruel and inhuman treatment. Her husband countered and obtained a prior divorce in Kentucky, which he used as a defense against her suit in New York. She had been sent a notice of the suit in accord with the Kentucky regulations but had not been served personally nor had she appeared before the Kentucky court. The New York court held that the Kentucky decree was non-effective, and gave her favorable judgment. This decision was reversed by the United States Supreme Court on the grounds that the Kentucky decree had not been given full faith and credit.<sup>12</sup> Legal literature presents every complication imaginable, many of them leaving the status of the husband and wife domiciled in different states ambiguous unless passed upon by the highest federal court.

The following are common grounds provided by the statutes for absolute divorce. With the exception of South Carolina all the jurisdictions permit divorce for adultery. In New York State this is the only ground for divorce and is allowable only under the following conditions: that both parties are residents when the offense is committed, or marriage is celebrated there, or plaintiff is a resident when the offense is committed and the action commenced, or the offense is committed there and the injured party is a resident when the suit is begun.<sup>13</sup> Forty-three American jurisdictions allow divorce for cruelty, thirty-five for impotence, forty-three for imprisonment or conviction of crime, forty for intoxication, four for insanity if either party was insane at the time of marriage, thirty for non-support, and forty-seven for desertion. New Hampshire recognizes thirteen grounds for divorce.<sup>14</sup> Nevada, which maintains at the present writing the most liberal divorce policy of any state because of its requirement of only six weeks' residence, recognizes nine grounds for divorce. The follow-

<sup>12</sup> See *Atherton v. Atherton*, 181 U. S. 155 (1901); also Drummond, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

<sup>13</sup> C. G. Vernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 23.

<sup>14</sup> I. Drummond, *op. cit.*, pp. 343-44.



ing table is its divorce record for 1930-1931.<sup>15</sup> In interpreting this it must be remembered that the marriage record is influenced by recent legislation passed in California and Idaho for the purpose of safeguarding marriage in those states.

	<i>Marriages</i>		<i>Divorces</i>		<i>Annulments</i>	
	1931	1930	1931	1930	1931	1930
Total number in the State . . .	7,630	6,100	5,260	2,609	34	38
Number per 1,000 of population . . . . .	82.93	67.0	57.17	28.67	..	..

There is so much overlapping in the statutory causes for divorce that the method of classifying decides the number of separate grounds recognized by the states and territories of the United States. According to Vernier's classification, there are thirty-nine separate causes for absolute divorce recognized in this country. About one-fourth of these are grounds that existed prior to marriage and are therefore actually provisions for divorce in those jurisdictions where this procedure is a substitute for the annulment of marriage.<sup>16</sup>

Thirteen of the thirty-nine causes are legalized by only one state. Marriage incompatibility does not appear at present as a legal ground for divorce in any state or territory. At one time this cause for divorce was in effect recognized by some of the states as a result of the legal interpretation given to incompatibility of temper which was a recognized ground for divorce. This is no longer true, but there are seven states that permit divorce when the husband and wife have remained separated for a definite time, although this has been done voluntarily. This provides an indirect way for obtaining divorce for domestic incompatibility.

Nothing more clearly reveals the archaic theory of divorce legislation than the fact that domestic incompatibility, which is nearly always the fundamental failure of a marriage, has no straightforward recognition as a proper ground for divorce, but instead people who cannot happily live together must depend for their legal divorcement upon the demonstration to the court that one of them has been guilty of some distinct offense listed as a sufficient ground for divorce in the jurisdiction where the complainant is domiciled. So long as this re-

<sup>15</sup> Preliminary Report on Marriage and Divorce for Nevada, 1931, Bureau of the Census.

<sup>16</sup> C. G. Vernier, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 65.

mains the procedure for the getting of divorce in the United States, the charges presented to the court will in large measure be subterfuges or merely acts committed for the purpose of breaking the legal ties. The getting of a divorce is bad in itself, but when the only relief for an impossible domestic situation appears to be through false accusation or trickery because of inherent incompatibility between the legal system and the mores of the people, the risk of demoralization becomes all the greater.

**Alimony.** Each American state and territory provides by statutory enactment the right of the court to fix alimony in case of divorce. This is in accord with the legal theory that the husband is responsible for the support of his wife, which historically issues from the woman's former economic dependency.

In only a few jurisdictions have the husband and wife equal rights to alimony. In the states where the husband has limited rights as compared with the wife, these are circumscribed by numerous restrictions. For example, seldom is he given a temporary allowance or permitted to charge against the wife the cost of litigation and the attorney's fee. She, on the other hand, is usually given the right of temporary alimony, the cost of the suit, and the charges of her lawyer. Alimony is granted the wife whether she is complainant or defendant in the case and without regard to the decision as to who is at fault, so long as her suit appears to be undertaken in good faith.

The court has power to grant temporary alimony and a permanent alimony. The granting of the latter is fixed by statute in the case of absolute divorce. The death of either husband or wife terminates alimony but it has been held that remarriage of the wife does not end her alimony, pending an appeal by the husband. It is generally held that the courts have no right to reverse the decree of alimony unless there be express power provided by statutes. At present twenty jurisdictions have no law authorizing revision. Only New York and Wisconsin make this revision mandatory, and then only in case the wife remarries.

Forty-seven jurisdictions leave the amount of the alimony to the discretion of the court. In Georgia it is fixed by the jury. Louisiana and Minnesota limit the amount that may be granted, the former prohibiting taking from the husband more than one-third of his income, while in Minnesota the amount of the alimony and the value of the property given the wife must not exceed one-third of the per-

sonal estate, one-third of the income, and one-third of the real estate of the husband. There is variation between the states as to whether the alimony may be paid in installments, whether it must consist of money or whether it may be in the form of real or personal property, and as to the sources from which the alimony may come. In fixing the amount of alimony the court takes into account the social status, age, and health of the husband and wife.

**The status of children.** It is when the couple seeking divorce are parents that we see the full pathos of their marriage failure. Divorce endangers the well-being of the child and greatly complicates the problem of settlement. It is the general practice of the court to determine the custody of the child at the time when the decree of absolute divorce is granted. As a rule the court is free to determine the custody of the child in accord with its discretion, and it attempts to make a settlement according to what seems for the child's advantage.

Frequently what should be the strongest link between husband and wife innocently becomes the cause of the bitterest possible estrangement as each struggles to convince the court that she or he is better prepared to undertake the responsibility of the care and education of the offspring whom they both love. It is a sorry spectacle and, whatever the final outcome, it is the child who suffers most. Without question, full recognition of this would restrain a considerable number of unhappy married couples from seeking divorce, at least until their children have matured.

Here, as in the other legal aspects of divorce, we find confusion, inconsistency, and at times decisions that seem to the layman atrocious. We even have opposite decisions rendered by the same court dealing with identical problems.<sup>17</sup> It is only when one becomes acquainted with the evils resulting from divorce, as they affect the life of children, that one realizes in full measure the necessity of society's making every effort by education and legislation to prevent marriage failure, and the great need of providing the best possible means of reconciliation and settlement for those in matrimonial difficulty. Almost always the divorce becomes a misfortune for the child concerned. It may be the lesser of two evils, but it is rarely a fortunate status for the child.

**Divorce not a solution.** The divorce may be the best possible method of escape from a bad situation for husband or wife; it is sel-

<sup>17</sup> I. Drummond, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

dom a final solution of any domestic difficulty. Only those who take marriage casually and who lack any domestic inclination or ideals find in divorce complete relief from a status no longer desired. Those to whom marriage originally had meaning must find in divorce only a partial solution to their failure to achieve domestic satisfaction.

It is not possible to throw aside a portion of one's life and take toward it an attitude of indifference. There is always an emotional leakage connected with the breakdown of high hope, and this seeps over into subsequent life in spite of the fact that the court decrees that the man and woman are life partners no longer. In fact, they have been too closely associated to be completely severed by any court decision.

This fact that divorce rarely gives a complete solution to a bad situation is one of the common surprises that come to those who are divorced. Impelled by their dissatisfaction or indignation, they seek divorce, assuming that the court judgment will wipe away all emotional tension and put them back where they were before they married. This they soon find not to be true. In some cases, could they foresee the disillusion that divorce will bring they would be more willing to attempt reconciliation. Their marriage has ended in failure but soon they find that in spite of their legal freedom happiness is still not achieved. Many of them are quarreling with life itself, and whether single or married have not the resources for happiness. Others flee from present trouble, not realizing that divorce may only partly close the gate to discontent and rarely provides a clear passage to happiness.

The following cases illustrate that divorce is only a partial solution, even when necessary, from marriage disillusion.

#### *Case 52*

*Emotional reaction to divorce from a man.* In my case divorce has been like a painful surgical operation undergone in the belief that it would be for the better, but resisted emotionally at nearly every step. My wife was the only one who verbally urged and advocated the divorce; I never did so. Yet it was I rather than she who had something to gain by it: I was in love with another woman and could reasonably expect to marry her, in fact I had two women who were willing to marry me. I was fond of both and found both better adjusted to me than was my wife. She on the other hand had nothing to gain except freedom from the jealous annoyance which these women had caused her. She was very attractive, quite the sort of person one would expect to find another man, yet I always felt



that her emotional reactions to men and her technique of handling them were not favorable toward her making a remarriage. She was in love with no one else, but I felt that she had never been completely in love with me and would find it difficult to fall in love with any man. In spite of her angry resentment against me and her repeated requests for divorce, I felt an overwhelming pity for her. Intellectually I reasoned that her need for love-at-any-cost was not as great as mine, that she had a greater chance for happiness through a loveless life than through a love seared by the flames of jealousy. But emotionally I put myself in her situation, while continuing to hold my own attitudes and values, and thus imagined her situation seemed to me most pitiable.

The process of divorce was extremely painful. After it was started I sought happiness through anticipation of remarriage. Whenever she balked on some legal point, or seemed to hesitate, I wanted to jam the thing through, but whenever she ceased resistance I felt tenderness and pity and hated to go ahead with the process. I think our divorce laws abominable; in their effort to make divorce difficult they merely make it needlessly painful and in fact tend to hasten it after it is once started. My wife and I had been practically separated for two years before we started the legal procedure. If we could have been sure of getting the divorce at any time we wanted it in order for either of us to remarry, there would not have been so much haste. But my great fear was of being blocked from movement in any direction, of being held in a position of waiting and suspense, unable to rewin my wife's affections and also unable to marry some one else. Therefore, once the divorce was decided upon, I fretted in the desire to get the waiting period over as soon as possible, in order that I might be free. The legal obstacles did not in the long run make any difference. Our feelings toward each other seemed to be quite independent of legal relationship; the legal procedure merely served as a nuisance, adding needless and extraneous anxieties.

Even though we had been quarreling and living separately for sometime, the final attainment of divorce was of little relief. The real conflict was within myself; the conflict between my desire for an interesting and satisfactory love life for myself, and the desire to have my children and to restore to happiness the one who had lived with me so long. I know that my marriage was a mistake, my friends all think so, I know that the same maladjustments would continue if we were to become reconciled, yet now that I am free forever from that discord, now that I am free to marry one with whom the love life is perfect, I feel no sense of triumph or relief, but only the dull pain of one just emerging from a serious operation. If only my former wife could find happiness through remarriage or through some personal achievement or adventure, I would feel happy. Until she

does I shall feel a sadness and a pity for her. When she is away, gone from me, a sort of halo seems to form about her, the romantic image of her as I first knew her and as I imagined her. Whenever I see her, as I do occasionally on account of business or the children, her personality annoys me and I am again reminded forcibly of the reasons why we cannot live together. If I show her a little tenderness or affection, she repulses me and renews her resentful attacks, and then I am glad I am rid of her; but as long as I do not see her there remains that idealized picture of what she might have been, or what I erroneously thought she might be, when I married her.

With her as a reality I am no longer in love, I have been bored and annoyed by her for years, and she of course, realizing this, has developed a hardness and a coldness which increases that annoyance on my part. But there is an unreal image of her, a phantom, which never completely existed in reality even during our best years, and that phantom, I suppose, will haunt me for the rest of my days; and no matter how happy I may be in my real life and love in the future, there will be moments of utter sadness and tears. In the privacy of my own soul I shall kneel at the grave of some one who is dead—or rather, of some one who never really lived—save in my romantic illusions.

### Case 53

*Divorce as a psychological experience from a woman.* From the removed viewpoint of divorce one is apt to look back upon the marriage experience and confuse the actual situation with the ideal for which one hoped. To avoid the bitterness which may come with the experience of divorce it is necessary to remember deliberately the more pleasant sides of the experience. Yet concentration upon these more pleasant happenings may easily lead to the beginning of the feeling that the divorce was a mistake. The little things, planting in the garden, making jelly and jam, and sitting by the fire are the things that rise to haunt a boarding house room until one remembers that with those things there was a devastating misery.

My divorce did not happen suddenly. It came of a long slow defeat which refused to acknowledge itself as defeat, a horrible sinking into a place where reality was indistinguishable from unreality. The immediate break was caused by the recurrence of a dream in which I thought I was choking my husband. I left the house. From then until now I have never missed him. I missed the house, the routine of the daily meals, the garden, the friends who were dear, but he as a person seems never to have been except as a dull background for the delicately beautiful memories.

Next to making a living my most serious problem has been a lack of

direction. A home and a family was the goal for which I strove. My own ignorance combined with other factors to keep it beyond my reach. I do not know why the defeat was so complete. Other women go through the experience and build another home. I think of having a home and glow with the thought, but it is only a thought, not a real overwhelming desire.

This lack of direction not only hampers me in the process of making a living but it clouds my approach to projects which others think important. I have no desire to crusade for anything. Reasonably I know this is a weak state but I do not seem able to lash myself into wanting anything passionately. Perhaps it is because during the years when I would not admit that marriage was a failure I fastened my mind on small things, waiting for a tulip to open, baking a cake, reading a poem, with such intensity that I can no longer grasp a more abstract and broader view.

This sense of failure is most apparent when I consider myself in comparison with others of my age. I knew that starting into the professional field after eight years of marriage would mean a struggle. When there is a question of my experience I cannot say I spent eight years managing a home. Such experience counts for nothing or counts on the debit side of the ledger. And it is right that it should. Homemaking is an individual job. It does not involve a boss of any one of the fifty-seven varieties, it presents a field in which one may use all the inventiveness and resourcefulness in one's nature. If I make an explanation I run the risk of being turned out and if I do not explain there is the risk of being thought a dabbler. During this period of getting a footing in a field crowded with women who have been there for ten years and younger women who have the audacity to attempt anything, there is a real danger that one may become like the little pig who is shoved away from his meal and fails to get anything because he keeps running around and around the backs of the others, squeaking while they eat. One must be a rooter.

The failure feeling is further accentuated by the quiet closing of many doors, some because I lack training, some because of my age, some because I don't believe any one thing is going to revolutionize the world, and some because I am divorced.

Curiously this prejudice against a divorced woman has existence apart from religious or moral standards. It becomes a transferred sex antipathy. It exists strongly in women who have not married toward the woman who has and increases in strength toward the woman who has been divorced. The explanation may be that the woman who has built her career at the expense of her normal experience with men always feels in a degree an antagonism toward men. The woman who has married and been divorced, if she has kept her head, lacks this antagonism. Psychically men are nec-

essary to her. She is accustomed to their presence, their manner of activity, and to their viewpoint. The simple fact that she has no active antagonism toward men breeds a tension between herself and women who have.

It is strangely true that a divorced woman is expected to have an active antagonism toward men, particularly in situations which concern physical sex. This idea no doubt originates from the certain knowledge that much divorce results from sex maladjustment. While this is true, it does not necessarily follow that an antipathy toward sex need flourish, or indeed can grow at all, if the woman is to have a normal outlook upon life which will eventually bring her a normal life experience in marriage.

The agony of sex maladjustment when it has been the primary cause for divorce postpones but cannot obviate the need of the woman for physical satisfaction. The lack of adjustment sometimes rises from the too frequent demands of the husband. These demands, although they may not bring any satisfaction or release of nerve tension, accustom the woman to a certain cycle of stimulation. The recurrence of this cycle after divorce may be so submerged by fatigue from physical work or from psychic suffering that it cannot be identified for what it is. These restraints are loosened by time, and as the mind clears and the body strengthens a definite sex craving presents itself.

With this recognized sex craving comes one of the gravest problems in the readjustment of the divorced woman. There is in the experience a memory of the tension and pain of experiences in marriage. There is a consciousness that certain persons are waiting for her to take some action more socially disapproved than her divorce. Frequently there are men who sensing her urgency are quick with argument and quicker with exploring hands. If it happens that the woman is driven by urgency into an experience unsatisfactory because of her lack of abandonment or disharmony of physical rhythm an antagonism toward the sex experience which is final in its bitterness and inhibitive power results.

How this experience is to be secured is a puzzle. The divorced woman is keenly aware of social pressure. An experience outside social approval might increase this awareness to a danger point. On the other hand, recalling the dissatisfactions of marriage growing out of an unsatisfactory union, she would be slow to contract marriage with the certainty of so important a factor in doubt.

Concerning my own experience I can remember little because I have deliberately forgotten it. Scrambling for a living has a therapeutic effect. There is little time for wondering how I feel. I am in good health. There will always be that in a strong body which buoys up the whole being. I have friends who were friends long ago and are friends now. So far,



through the staunchness of those friends I have had work to do, and while I do not do it with a great fervor, I enjoy each moment of it.

Only this fall there has come back to me an inner sensitiveness which had been gone for a long while. I no longer look at a tree black with rain, gaunt against the sky and remember a little sadly the way I once felt. Now I feel and know the sweep of living. I have begun to write again and read with the same keen joy that one eats food.

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## CHAPTER XXXI

### PROBLEMS OF THE UNMARRIED

**Marriage and life adjustment.** Marriage is a social convention. As such it is a product of experience in providing a method of regulating the human mating without which the race would necessarily soon disappear from the earth. We have every reason to assume that primitive man, or at least his predecessor, mated and propagated his kind for hundreds of years before he recognized the precise status of relationships which we now associate with marriage. In a narrow sense we can properly call marriage a social invention which has been found expedient in the regulating of sex conduct. In its wider and deeper interpretation marriage is a method of life adjustment. With the advancement of social culture it has gained significance and although it still provides the conventional program for the regulating of sex, it includes more than this. It represents a choice in the manner of living in sharp contrast with the single life.

It is only when marriage is regarded in its fullness as a way of living, an attempt to build a more satisfactory experience through a special relationship with another human being, that we get the full force of the problems of the unmarried. There is a disposition to think of the single life as something negative, an abstinence from the responsibilities and privileges that accompany marriage. This is, of course, misleading since the single life itself has to become, so long as it is persisted in, a form of life adjustment, but one directly opposite to that of marriage. No life program can continue as something negative. Every choice involves responsibilities and satisfactions. Thus marriage and the single life represent two absolutely different ways of attempting successful adaptation to life.

From this point of view the problems of the unmarried would merely be the learning to meet with success the situation resulting from the solution chosen, but unfortunately there is a complication which reveals the greater meaning of what we call the problems of the unmarried. In this choice between matrimony and the single life, we cannot assume that each individual is deliberately expressing prefer-

ence or is content with the decision made. Instead we know that a considerable number of persons who would rather marry have little or no opportunity and are forced to continue a life program against which their desires protest. Even those who are so constituted as to find their greatest happiness as unmarried individuals may, because of the social consequences of their status, or because they mistakenly charge to their not being married whatever dissatisfactions life brings them, rebel against their life situation. This means that not only do the single have their characteristic problems, but that as a rule these are more severe in form, accompanied with more tension than any of the perplexities encountered by most of those married.

There is a sense in which the conventional marriage scheme may be held responsible for the problems of the unmarried. Monogamy can, of course, provide entrance to matrimony for those who wish it only as the number of persons of mating age is equally distributed between males and females who are in the same proportion desirous of marriage. The actual situation at the present time seldom provides in any community an equality of marriageable men and women, and as a consequence the social policy of the western world of monogamous mating necessarily excludes from marriage some who wish it and some who for their happiness require it. Thus the difficulties of the single life constitute a major problem, possibly the supreme problem created by our present marriage system. The serious attacks on monogamy come not from those who criticize it as a faulty means of human adjustment for the individuals who choose marriage, but because it denies to a considerable number of men and more women all opportunity to achieve a socially approved and satisfying means of sex and life adjustment.

An easy solution for this difficulty by some type of abandonment of conventional marriage has from time to time been advocated, but the flow of civilization has been increasingly favorable to the monogamic status because the demands which the modern individual puts upon marriage are such as by their nature strengthen the one-man-and-one-woman type of marriage relationship. This emphasis upon an exclusive, affectionate relationship not only tends to shut certain individuals out of marriage but at the same time stimulates human cravings that make these same persons fundamentally in need of marriage.

No discussion that seeks to prepare for marriage can ignore the



problems that come to those who do not marry. In the effort to interpret marriage experience so as to give insight to those who enter upon it, suggestions are made that influence the individual's attitude toward the choice of marriage or of the single life. It cannot be assumed that he or she who seriously prepares for marriage will necessarily have opportunity to mate, and there is surely need of recognizing this considerable group who, however interested they may be in matrimony and its conditions, are not destined to know from personal experience what it means to be married.

In fairness to marriage also there has to be attention to the problems that face those who for one reason or another go through life as single individuals. It would distort the entire picture of present civilization, which needs to be clearly seen if adjustment is to be made successfully, to treat single life as a status free from positive difficulty, a mere avoidance of positive complications which are conceived as existing only in the marriage form of life program.

**Differences in individuals.** One of the most common distinctions made between individuals is that some are the marrying kind and some are not. This popular interpretation, so widely regarded as a fundamental explanation of why individual men and women do not marry, is a generalization which leaves out of account the desires, admitted or concealed, of those who appear most unlikely to marry, the lack of social contacts, and other conditioning circumstances.

The prerequisite to good choice in the making of successful life adjustment is an honest discovery as to whether the man or woman belongs to the group of those who should prepare for marriage or those who should keep to the single life. It may seem strange at first that so important and so obvious a need of self-knowledge should so often not have conscious or practical recognition. As a consequence there are some who assume contacts and behavior that lead them into marriage, who, were they acquainted with their preferences and with the conditions of the marriage and the single life status, would do nothing to encourage matrimony. On the other hand, a very considerable number of women would with the coming of maturity carry on a program from the start which would look toward marriage, because, having plumbed their disposition, they would have come to feel great need of their adjustment to life taking the form of marriage.

When marriage and the single life are thought of as two ways of life adjustment, we find that people fall into three classes. There

are those who can with reasonable success adapt themselves to life, either married or single. Whatever may be their greater desire, they will not fail to achieve happiness whether they finally marry or not. There is another group who can be reasonably satisfied in only one of the two situations, and everything depends on their learning whether they should or should not marry, and putting their knowledge to practical use. Some of these encounter failure because they leave the single life through social pressure or misapprehension of their own desire, and attempt marriage. Others equally fail because they refuse to marry or through some drifting policy or by a social mishap or inherent lack of attraction never are given the opportunity to marry, or, if it comes, either fail to see it or do not accept it. Then there is a third group for whom life in any form is too much and who, neither as single nor married, can ever attain a satisfactory adaptation to their circumstances. Under the most favorable conditions they will be unhappy and the most that can be done for them is to steer them into the type of relationship which will mean the less hardship.

It might seem that for this group prudence would automatically lead toward the single life, but this does not follow. Their neurotic trends may be greatly aggravated by attempting either to suppress sex or to express it in other types of relationship than that which is conventional. Moreover, the neurotic, like other human beings, has a larger stake in marriage than that identifiable with sex. Their fellowship cravings, to attempt to sever the two aspects of what we popularly describe as love, may have the most determining influence in their life. In spite of the fact that they cannot work out a satisfactory relationship, their failure in marriage may be far less consequential for them than would be their personality failure, were they to remain unmarried. When we consider the situation from the point of view of the husband or wife who marries such an individual, or the children that may come from such a union, our attitude may change. We may feel strongly that such a neurotic person has no moral or social right to marry, but we will not establish our judgment with the belief that this choice of not marrying means less of a problem of stress for the man or woman who makes the decision.

There is a disposition among many who think about the problems of marriage to forget the problems of the unmarried. For example, there is considerable skepticism found both in literature and in the common thinking of people which has resulted from the unhappiness of men

and women in marriage, as expressed in separation and divorce. Frequently everything is blamed upon the status of marriage itself and there is no realization of the dissatisfactions and maladjustments of the unmarried and the divorced. The failure of marriage is in considerable proportion confessed publicly and recorded in divorce statistics.

The failures of those who have chosen or who have been forced to accept the single life program of adjustment are, on the other hand, very largely unnoticed except by those who are close to the individual or by specialists in psychology and psychiatry who are called upon to give assistance. In the analysis of the life difficulties of the members of this group who seek outside help, it is no uncommon thing to recognize that without marriage a satisfactory life adjustment cannot be had. In many of these cases it is equally clear that there is practically no hope of matrimony. As a consequence specialists attempt to lead the patient into an acceptance of the less desirable form of adjustment because there is no other choice and unless their destiny be accepted there can be no hope of happier circumstances.

Unquestionably the facts of human maladjustment, as brought forth by the scientist, will encourage men and women to face more frankly the meaning of the choice between marriage and no marriage, and will considerably destroy the concealment and the reticence that have been largely responsible for the non-marriage of certain individuals. However valuable this knowledge is in building a more open code of behavior, it will clearly not solve the greater problems associated with our present marriage system, except as it also lessens the number of those who choose marriage against their genuine need and thus block the opportunity for matrimony for some other individual who distinctly needs to marry.

It is unfortunate that under the circumstances there cannot be in most cases a straightforward, uncomplicated decision between the single life and marriage. For many the matrimonial decision appears to be coerced by circumstances outside personal desire. For some of these the single life means a situation suggestive of those who are not elected for membership in a secret society on the college campus. It is not that belonging to such an organization is so important for personal satisfaction as it is that the knowledge that one cannot belong becomes a root of inferiority feeling or of a strong desire to satisfy curiosity. One may not be over-anxious to become a mem-

ber, but one hates to be known as an individual who cannot join because of lack of an invitation. This sort of reaction is not uncommon among women who have not married. Many of them know that they did have an opportunity or easily could have made an opportunity to enter matrimony, but nevertheless they are conscious of the fact that they are shut out of an experience which is usually considered normal, and realize that many will interpret this as having come about contrary to their desire. This gives marriage an unnatural prestige and adds to the unmarried problems that are not involved in their status itself.

There is every reason to suppose that marriage will lose this artificial attraction as society becomes more adjusted to the fact that many individuals must find their most satisfying adjustment to life in the experience of the non-married. Already there are trends that indicate that marriage cannot much longer profit from the social prestige it has so long had but must depend upon its ability to satisfy those who enter matrimony, and cannot benefit to so great a degree from pressure from the conventions. Both the single life and marriage will be orthodox, conventional methods of life adjustment and the mores will more and more recognize that both these types of adjustment to life are positive and in a large measure voluntary programs.

The situation will be similar to that which is now true of parenthood. Not long since it was taken for granted that any married couple who had no children were unable to become parents. Now society has become reconciled to a new attitude toward parenthood which permits to the wife a definite choice, and no one dares to assume when children do not appear that it is, from the viewpoint of those concerned, a deprivation. Instead it grows more and more clear that two different life reactions are represented and that every social incentive that makes parenthood attractive needs to be exercised or fewer children will be born than is good for society. As the single life becomes more clearly a positive program of life adjustment in contrast to the opposite positive program of marriage, it will develop characteristic behavior as a practical method of adjustment, just as marriage has.

Even under such circumstances it is likely that there will always be a portion of the single who will feel that they are shut out of an experience they desire or about which they are curious, but for the greater number the single life will not seem the negation that it still



so commonly appears to the unmarried. Changes in thought and in mores are inevitable, for society, to personify social reactions, will have to adjust itself to the emergence of the single life as a genuine rival to marriage. Woman's advance in dependence and social equality forbids the continuation of a system of mores which grew out of her social inferiority and economic dependence. The status of man is of course involved, but the influences leading to a readjustment of our social code necessarily reflect the new situation of women since it is in the status of the woman rather than of the man that conditions are so different.

**Our conventions assume marriage.** Nothing is more taken for granted by our conventions than that the normal adjustment to life is marriage. It is the basic assumption upon which for the most part all the regulations that concern the association of men and women are based. This social attitude has so long existed and has been so firmly maintained that it has become axiomatic even in the thinking and acting of the unmarried. As Keller has so well said, those who are left out of marriage are so well drilled in the acceptance of the code of conduct that protects and enforces matrimony and secures the family, that they do not attempt to repudiate the standard set by conventions but rather if they react at all suffer loss of self-esteem that they are forbidden entrance to the normal way of living. Their acceptance of their exclusion does not change the fact that until a more positive outlook is given to the unmarried state, their predicament becomes the crucial problem of monogamy.<sup>1</sup>

A great part of the consequences of the negative interpretation the social conventions have given the status of the unmarried is registered in neurotic experience, producing one of the most frequent and difficult adjustment problems that come to the psychiatrist. However much the individual may be helped by psychoanalysis, through the stripping of his life to its essential causal features, the difficulty from which he suffers is social, registering the unintelligent and even brutal methods of society in its attempt to maintain marriage adjustment as the norm of human association.<sup>2</sup>

Since the woman carries the burden of this situation, for she still constitutes the sex group of the left-overs and feels much more strongly than man the repressive code, the change in her social status which

<sup>1</sup> W. G. Sumner and A. G. Keller, *The Science of Society*, pp. 2054-56.

<sup>2</sup> Trigant Burrow, *The Social Basis of Consciousness*, p. 242.

has taken place outside the area of marriage must necessarily permeate the conventions and eventually provide for her a more positive outlook upon life. In plain terms, this breaking of the assumption that the marriage program is the only normal method of life adjustment will inevitably give way to the general acceptance of two different life programs, and as this is accomplished marriage will be relieved of the difficulties created by those who enter it because of its social prestige and special privileges, while at the same time the single life will have the advantage of being more often the preferred program of those who cling to it. This emerging situation, of which already there are evidences, will lessen the failures of marriage, because those fundamentally ill-prepared for such a human association will keep away from it, while at the same time the single life will gain by not so often seeming to be a penalty for those who are shut out of normal human adjustment.

Meanwhile those who are eager to strengthen marriage and increase its successes must not forget the need of preparing many individuals for the non-marriage existence by emphasizing the compensations that even now exist for those who do not marry. Nothing could be more cruel or a greater ignoring of the facts of present society than to provide instruction for marriage for young men and women with no regard to the certainty that some of them either from preference or from necessity will not marry. If this is forgotten, the instruction will add weight to the burden that these young people are likely to carry through life in so far as they feel that they are a peculiar sort or are a socially ostracized group of people forced to accept a life obligation. Even when their choice represents the best adjustment to life of which they are capable and the one most in accord with their innermost craving they will distrust their motive and feel that they are forcing themselves by some rationalizing process to tolerate a destiny from which they cannot escape. These same individuals, if driven into marriage by social pressure, will find their new problems greater than those from which they have fled.

**Marriage and individual choice.** Marriage is not desired by all. Indeed, except where stark necessity gave no choice, this has always been true. In some primitive societies the adult had no more freedom to refuse marriage than to decide whether or not to be born. Just as soon, however, in the evolution of society as the status of marriage was open to refusal, there were both men and women who

chose to remain single. In modern society there has never been a more propitious environment for the starting of marriage than that provided by colonial America. In spite of the ease with which the young couple could marry and start housekeeping there were some who from choice became old maids and bachelors. This was true in spite of intense pressure from public opinion, from ridicule,<sup>3</sup> and even from law, which put a tax on the bachelor.<sup>4</sup> In Maryland, for example, between 1755 and 1763 thirty-nine bachelors were recorded in St. Thomas's Parish, although they were subject to a tax which reveals the common feeling with regard to the deliberate spinster and bachelor. In an earlier Maryland law we find a provision for the removal of ownership of land from the woman who over a seven-year period refused to marry.<sup>5</sup>

As compared with conditions in the seventeenth and eighteenth century in America, our period not only offers the greatest possible freedom of choice as to whether to marry or not for both man and woman, but unquestionably also provides greater incentive for remaining single. The economic motive, for example, which in the earlier time added to the advantages of being married, is either diminished or entirely eliminated. Society is so distinctly interested in the establishment of new families that we must expect from time to time serious proposals offered either to put pressure upon adults refusing to marry or to provide special inducement to marry and to have children. It is inconceivable that any agitation or legislation along these lines will get far or have any effectiveness so long as the individualism of our civilization persists. American society must become reconciled to the freedom of the individual to prefer marriage or to decide against it.

There is also another group, who, if they marry, prove fundamentally unfit for matrimony. It would appear a wise social policy to attempt to discover such persons and discourage their marrying. This, were it possible, would prove an advantage for them and would lessen the strain put upon marriage as a social institution. When it becomes customary for men and women to have a thorough-going pre-marriage clinic examination, with attention to both physical and mental conditions that influence marital adjustment, many of these individuals

<sup>3</sup> A. W. Calhoun, *A Social History of the American Family*, Vol. II, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 67-68.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 247.

will be discovered and advised to remain single. These persons, however, would constitute a small part of the group who are popularly classified as undesirable candidates for matrimony, for most men and women are biologically prepared for mating. The apparent unfitness for marriage of those who seem from the start the type of person that should have remained single is artificially caused, resulting from unfavorable social events, wrong teaching, accidental shocks, and other misfortunes encountered during childhood, but this emotional unfitness is no less a serious handicap to matrimonial success because it is a product of environmental influences.

Even if it were desirable for all to marry, under prevailing conditions matrimony would be denied to some. The effect of the World War in creating a disproportion between men and women of marriageable age is illustrative of a situation which in lesser degree is rather common in American communities, and forbids genuine choice for every man and woman. There must be not only an equal number of marriageable males and females who can come to know each other, but there must be also a good distribution within groups formed by the association of men and women of congenial characteristics. There cannot be merely a male for every female. There must be the possibility of mutual attraction. In spite of the great freedom permitted by American customs, it must be recognized that differences in background, disposition, economic status, race, religion and the like have a limiting influence so that for the purpose of marriage any particular man or woman may find no desirable candidate for courtship and marriage among those who are possible associates of the opposite sex.

Nothing reveals more strikingly the difference between the man and the woman as a candidate for matrimony than the fact that it is seldom that a man who wishes to marry cannot find a mate. Practically any kind of male, whatever his physical, social, mental or moral defects, may, if he will, marry. There are four reasons for this. (1) The woman is handicapped because the conventions do not give her the right to open, aggressive courtship. This and the privilege of proposal still persist as masculine prerogatives. (2) The conventions forbid her any escape from sex tension in ways still open to men, by public recognition of double standard for the male. Any illicit relationship for her will generally hazard her chances of marriage, although this will not be true of the man. If she accepts a temporary solution for



her physical problem she realizes that she endangers her greater desire for a lesser satisfaction. (3) Because of war, economic conditions, concentration of male workers, educational and professional preparation and other conditions, there are in many social sets more women than men.

Women still have in the mass a lesser economic opportunity and security and a correspondingly greater incentive for marriage. This undoubtedly is the chief explanation of the fact that any man appears able to find a mate. He may have to choose her from a lower level, and of course the lower the economic plane, the more she suffers from insecurity and the more eager she is to marry.

**Young woman's dilemma.** The thoughtful, ambitious and intellectual young woman finds herself in a dilemma. She is not only in competition with other women but with men, and because of emphasis on sex differences may be very self-conscious in her rivalry with male associates. The college girl hears from many quarters constant indictment of the young woman who does not as adequately prepare herself for a vocation as does the man, and any distinction, recognition or inspiration that she receives impels her toward full use of her intellectual resources, in further or more concentrated study. If, however, she is conscious of her greater desire to marry, she soon realizes that concentration upon her study, business or profession is likely to be dangerous to her deeper life's desire. Her position is not that of her male rival, for even if he concentrates upon his preparation for life or his vocation he may at any time turn to the thought of marriage and ordinarily not find himself greatly handicapped in selecting a mate.

This postponement a woman cannot afford to make unless she is willing to run considerable risk of being matrimonially isolated. On the other hand, any attention to men may bring risk to her ambition. Under such circumstances a compromise of two antagonistic interests seems wise but in practice this frequently is found difficult, especially when the woman's work takes so much time and energy that she cannot safely give thought to men.

Moreover the man's success will make him all the more attractive to women while the woman's success will frequently erect a barrier between the kind of man she wants to marry and herself. The significance of this has recently appeared in the newspaper report of the divorce of two people connected with the movies, giving as the

only motive the husband's fear that his wife's success as an actress was overshadowing and hurting his career.

**The ambivalent attitude.** There are young unmarried women who are both attracted and driven away from marriage by their conflicting desires. This inconsistency is explained by the earlier history which has built up both fear of marriage and desire for it. One of the common results of this emotional dissociation is the young woman's interest in married men. Such women will complain that they are attracted only to men who are already married. In some cases this is the result of the poverty of the woman's social environment, but more often it is a defense mechanism on her part, when married men provide a feasible substitute for love and courtship. She finds them stimulating and they save her from a sense of loneliness; their attention assures her of her attractiveness and establishes her self-esteem. On the other hand, because a man is married she feels safeguarded from situations in which she would have to make a deliberate choice to marry or not to marry. Sometimes there is added to these motives the additional desire to fixate upon an older man who can be made to take the place once held by her own father. This type of woman who associates only with married men becomes shy, self-conscious, awkward and even antagonistic in her relationships to unmarried men of her own age.

Although so often this experience provides for the woman a practical method of keeping alive her social inclination, it always carries a double risk. In instances where the man is himself unhappily married it may prove extremely difficult to keep the relationship within assigned bounds. The opposite danger is that it entices the woman away from contacts she ought to form, leading her to drift into a decision to remain single or into conditions that will give her no choice. In the latter case sooner or later she is sure to realize that expediency has defeated her intention some day to marry.

**Motives for not marrying.** The motives for not marrying are as multifarious as for other human decisions. Likewise there is complication in the fact that an attempt to analyze them often encourages rationalization. They fall in two main divisions, motives that are deliberate and motives that indirectly determine the decision. Henry Newman in his life apology tells us that he early decided that he had no right to marry. The kind of work he intended to do in life was, in his opinion, one that did not justify marriage. Unquestionably the

psychoanalyst interested in human conduct would wish to delve deeper into the causes of this attitude than did Newman. However, he represents one who deliberately decided to remain single. It is not always inclination that is back of this conscious choice of the single life, for there may be conscientious scruples against marrying. Those with bad inheritance, chronic disease, physical defect and other similar handicaps may decide that it would be immoral or unwise for them to attempt matrimony.

One of the most common illustrations of the indirect decision is the experience of the woman who goes on with her education, wins an advanced degree, then teaches in a college, and eventually discovers that she has isolated herself from men and that, barring an extraordinary change of circumstances, she will never marry.

**Problems of those once married.** The ordinary problems that come to those who are not married are intensified in the experience of those who, having been married, find themselves forced into a single life. Men and women who have lost their mate by death in many cases have, added to their grief and loneliness, if the break has occurred during the period of sex vitality, an enormous physical strain due to the ending of the union. A large proportion of these men and women, if they have any opportunity, eventually remarry and, risky as is a second marriage, it is the only possible solution that offers them any degree of successful adjustment to life. The position of those who have been divorced is, within the same age limit, similar to that of widows and widowers. In the one case grief and loss of the beloved and in the other bitterness and disappointment provide the complications that endanger the new alliance.

To those who have had their married life broken, whether by death or by the divorce decree, the absence of children, especially in the case of the woman, may be an added incentive to remarry. The presence of children likewise may lessen the inclination to remarry. Of course, in such a case the relief that the father or mother receives may easily become a means of exploiting the child. The following case reveals the reaction of a young woman recently divorced.

#### *Case 54*

Having a child is a vague phrase which in adolescence represented to me the acme of human achievement. Marrying and having a baby seemed to me to be inseparable. I married early, a young man well versed in birth control methods which he thought should prevent our having a child until

he had finished his professional training. Four years did not seem long and I agreed that we had little or no money for a baby.

This birth control knowledge resulted in an almost constant and painful congestion for me and proved to be of very doubtful value. Three months after marriage I became pregnant. In the beginning I was fiercely glad and terrified by my illness and by my husband's cold critical attitude. After a while I realized that in spite of his smooth words about the child which must be welcome if God sent it into our home, he hated me. I can too well remember the disgust in his eyes when I was sick and the air of martyrdom which he assumed when I was too ill to tend the fire or cook a meal. Night after night he came to my bed, satisfied himself, and slept while I stayed in the bath too violently sick to go back to bed.

Fortunately I remember little of the weary time that culminated in an operation. During my recovery a strange process began. My husband said and really believed that I was wholly responsible for losing the child. He pitied me for my lack of emotional control and at the same time blamed me for depriving him of a son. I could have borne the child, had I so desired, he felt.

During the eight years I lived with my husband there was not a time when I sincerely desired a child. That child would be in part his. Many times in my own hunger for affection, given and received, I yearned for a child. But such desolation I knew could be overcome by a friend or a lover as well as by a child. Why no child came I do not know. My husband was beginning to grow ashamed of having no family.

In the early days of our marriage I believed that a child would help us find an understanding and an affection which we lacked. So it might have been but I do not now believe in the magic power of a child to change adults.

In my thought marriage and children are still inseparable. I have refused two offers of marriage because this is so. One man with his fits of sulky jealousy and his selfish demands for small services did not seem to have the potential fatherly qualities. I should expect him to be as jealous of a child who claimed any of my attention as he was of my lifelong friends. The other man is a Jew, of an orthodox family.

I still want children, and marriage, and a home, but it is a want which takes a good bit of pruning. One has a living to earn, a certain amount of social reticence to preserve, and a great deal of unsentimental thinking to do. One must not confuse the desire for love with the desire for children, for while the two fuse, the one is not the other. And of late I have discerned a curious thing, when dealing with children I am conscious that I assume the cold matter of fact manner in which my grandmother reared



me. The real problem is whether with all of my suffering, my hunger for love, my loneliness, I could be the right sort of mother.

**Compensation for remaining single.** The problem that the man or woman faces who is unmarried, whether this be the result of a broken family or whether there has never been any marriage at all, is one of finding adequate compensation. The single life has its advantages. Happiness in any situation depends upon finding a reasonable outlet for one's interests and energies. Many unmarried people add to their unhappiness by failure to make good use of such opportunities as do come to them to live a useful, contented life. The fact that they might under appropriate conditions prefer to marry need not keep them from reaping the satisfactions that are within their experience. The following case is a record of success by one who has made much of life, even though her decision thus far to remain single has been the indirect result of circumstances.

*Case 55*

That I may never marry has not worried me seriously. That I may marry too late to have children has worried me frequently and seriously. Marriage for its own sake has had no appeal for me. Marriage with love has a tremendous appeal.

In general, I am conscious of no sense of inferiority caused by the fact that I have not married. When I am in a group of married women who have little interest other than their homes, I have sometimes felt slightly rankled at their obvious feeling of superiority. I have been so quizzed by aged relatives at times concerning my failure to marry that I have felt the family honor has been slightly tainted.

I am only rarely conscious of any physical stress which marriage could alleviate. I seem to have become past master at rationalization. Too, my physical and emotional reactions in this respect seem to be quite unrelated. Sometimes I think I am motivated so strongly by an ideal of love that it in itself is almost sufficient. I have felt rather stronger physical reactions to the unaccepted love advances of men for whom I have had no stronger affection than a congenial companionship inspires, than for men whom I have loved. I have enjoyed tête-à-tête occasions with those whom I have loved much as any woman would, I think. I am not entirely oblivious of physical, mental or emotional satisfaction in whatever intimacy such incidents have held. However, review of such situations, or reënacting such scenes later in my mind has tended to induce more decided physical cravings than I have ever felt in the presence of the object of my love. Books on sex tend to induce an erotic excitement, short-lived and controllable by

exertion of the will. As I have read more and more about my physical equipment for sexual love, I have discovered that I can definitely excite myself at will but the procedure has held no interest or pleasure besides that had from a scientific experiment. I wanted to prove to myself that I was a normal woman.

I have felt no handicap in association with men. No, in fact I have most delightful friendships and confidences from many of the men I have been privileged to know with any degree of intimacy. The confidences of a friend of mine who is divorced from her husband lead me to think that men offer an entirely different friendship to an unattached, previously married woman than any I have found, and that in many respects my life is preferable to hers.

I frequently decide that I would not change places with this and that married woman whom I know. When my married friends bring their difficulties to me for sympathy, I say to myself that I am spared that sort of worry, at least. So many of my intimate married friends are childless that I frequently think of the fact that in this respect, I am as well off as they are. Many experiences, escapades, and pleasures which come with freedom from responsibility for others are possible when one is single that are impossible for a married person. Since life is not finished and I enjoy its unraveling, I can but contemplate my state of "single blessedness" (?) with full appreciation for the irony of it and dismiss it with a smile.

I find a tendency to analyze what has led one to accept or to prefer the unmarried experience just as one reviews his or her life in relation to other matters. The situation has never held more or less regrets than many other events in my life which have shaped its future rather markedly.

I would very much have liked to have been the mother of a large family. However, I have become more or less free from acute regret in this connection. I have two married sisters who are childless and might have been so myself even if I had married early in life. I enjoy a fine heritage of health, intellect, beauty and Scotch-Irish, English and Swiss blood and hate to think that a good family line will die out through my neglect.

Trees, flowers, animals, birds, insects, babies, children, old people, all are a joy to me and I can keep rather busy taking an interest in whatever of such comes into my environment. Having learned early in life to make the best of what I have, rather than to fret for those things I would like to have but have not, I try to enjoy to the full whatever comes under my jurisdiction or into my life.

The following cases register protest against being single on the part of two young women who are making exceptional use of their opportunities and still hold the notion of some day marrying.

*Case 56*

I am an unmarried woman, thirty-three years old, college-bred, a writer and research worker. My family are of the professional class, descended on one side from the "landed gentry" of the south—intelligent, honorable, simple, unaffected, independent, and more or less sophisticated. I have five brothers, all younger than I, toward whom I feel a high degree of affection and confidence. I have a few devoted men friends of long standing, and have been in love two or three times; but I have never been in any sense promiscuous with men.

Although I understand that some women come to a decision that they are not likely to marry, and develop resignation or a compensation, I have never placed the possibility of marriage outside consideration. I may marry at any age, or I may not marry. As far as actual experience is concerned, I seem to be more attractive to men now than I have ever been in my life.

At times, during periods of discouragement, hard work, and an insufficient amount of association with stimulating men, I have realized that I had low emotional tone, that I was depressed, nervous, irritable, tense. At one such period I actually developed a few fears. However, the denial of sex, when there is no desired object of affection, is diffused in effect, producing nervous and mental disturbances rather than physical. I firmly believe that most unjust, unfair, unkind, and even radical people are the victims of this diffused and undefined longing. Because I was "on to myself" I managed to keep my thinking straight. During such a period there is apt to be a sense of inferiority and a handicap in associations with men, because nothing seems worth while and it is difficult to put *enough of oneself forward* to attract. However, one successful party, or one brief passage of arms with an attractive man, is enough to fix all this, even if only temporarily.

My emotional reactions are always intensified just before and during the menstrual period. At that time I am depressed, irritable, and passionate.

So far I have not built up any compensations for not being married. I think I should be—am eminently fitted for it. I would rather be *well married*, according to my concept of what being well married means, than the most distinguished and successful professional woman in the world. I do not think that there is such a thing as adequate compensation for not being married with realistic women who are honest with themselves. Therefore I think that modern education and those forces which operate for the changing status of women should be carefully examined in the light of woman's psychic needs.

I have analyzed my situation very thoroughly at various stages of my

career, and know exactly what I want,—also why I haven't it yet. Higher education, and having to make my living in an environment unproductive of the kind of men I find congenial, have had something to do with it. Also in my case there was a certain reserve and timidity, based upon the fact that I was one of those more or less isolated and detached "superior children" who always excel in everything and are too old for their age, that prevented enough experimentation in youth to learn the original nature of the male creature. Now that I am gradually and deliberately learning it, I feel more confident of the future.

I think that the so-called feeling of loss of potential motherhood is an exaggerated sentimentality with most women who feel it, and I believe that it is attributed to many women who do not feel it at all. I have never desired a child in the abstract, although I always consider with pleasure the possibility of having any number of children by men whom I care for. I think I should probably retain my interest in the father undiminished upon having children. I can't conceive of living one's whole emotional life in one's children.

Since I don't believe in maternal impulses, only broadly loving and humane impulses common to both men and women, I should say that the love a woman would give to children is in the case of the well-balanced unmarried woman sublimated in a love of humanity and an attempt to alleviate other people's troubles.

The most difficult problem I have met is how to control passionate desire based on actual love when it cannot for an indefinite period be satisfied. There is physical pain, nervousness, nausea, apprehension, excitement, irritability experienced in connection with it, and such manifestations are not necessarily due to radical or excessive play. As far as I can see, one has to grin and bear it, and stay away from the loved one until she gets calm again. Exercise helps, but intellectual occupation not only does not help much, but is sometimes itself made extremely difficult. Mental catharsis, with a trusted confidant, helps. I think this is one of the most pressing problems of young people to-day. Society and personal integrity make illicit relations impossible. Society makes it practically impossible for many people to marry, because of economic conditions. Two people passionately in love with each other cannot stand the strain of denial, and their relationship, even though it may be based on true congeniality and respect, is ruined by blind emotion. Thus society defeats its own end.

### *Case 57*

My first problem as an unmarried woman came out of an inability to meet men. The only eligibles in the small town where I had grown up



were men who either held no attraction for me or with whom I could not afford to associate if my social standing were to be maintained. The men with whom I became friendly and whom I apparently attracted during vacations without exception lived at such distances that visiting more often than once or twice a year, if that frequently, was utterly impracticable.

Being "beauless" had its effect upon my emotional set-up, and to overcome the inferiority feeling which such a situation brought about I rationalized by considering myself a man-hater. My defense mechanism where men were concerned was a nonchalance that I did not actually feel and that in no way was efficacious in rectifying an already bad situation. It is too bad that more unmarried women will not admit to themselves that there is no magnetism in "man hating" by which men may be drawn, but that such an attitude builds a barrier that no man is interested in battering down.

Moving to a city where there was an abundance of desirable young men overcame this first problem only to present a second more difficult one—namely, how to maintain one's original sex standards and at the same time stabilize friendship with men acquaintances the majority of whom did not seem eager for marriage but desirous of all its privileges without surrendering personal freedom or incurring obligations. Modern courting methods have forced a keen physical competition to the point where a woman must almost inevitably employ a subtle technique that more or less intimates or gives hopes of future gratification, all the time hoping that before the show-down the man will come to agree with certain standards and decide he is ready to offer the security of marriage, or, if the girl is not in love with him, reliable friendship.

Thus far I have waged the battle with optimism. At least this was true until a year or so ago when personal experience forced me to recognize that the situation extended itself even into the ministerial realm—a realization that broke almost the last straw supporting my ideals.

Different to what is true of some of my women friends, being single has brought me no inferiority feeling from a social standpoint. Perhaps this is true because I have been friendly with a large group of married women who have apparently taken it for granted that I should be included in their various social doings. Then, too, I have been aware of discontent between enough married couples to cause me to believe myself rather envied on account of my freedom.

There are times when I think I miss having children, but I am now almost convinced that my many reiterations of a desire for them unconsciously have been "bait" to attract a husband, for since learning that

my fiancé does not particularly care for children my own desires in this direction have become practically nil.

I cannot honestly leave this discussion without admitting that many of the experiences wherein my extremely warm nature has been involved have left me sorely tempted. Fortunately, as I approach the age of twenty-seven, the right man has come upon my horizon and marriage is not far distant. Had this not come true, I sometimes believe that within a few years my resistance against physical consciousness would have become worn down and perhaps relationships entered into that our present social code would not permit me to acknowledge publicly. It is more likely, however, that I should have held on from year to year to my present belief that it would be foolish and folly to forfeit, in order to pacify a moment's urgency, my future peace of mind. As it is, I am thrilled with the thought that my marriage experience will not be spoiled by unhappy recollections.

#### *Case 58*

35 years old—When I face the fact frankly that I am not marrying and am at the age where marriage is rapidly becoming less probable, I wonder what there is in me which has prevented my attaining the thing I wanted most.

At times the emotional reaction to this situation is almost entirely subconscious. When work is pressing, health abounding, and experience well integrated the problem seems to be of little consequence. It is at the time when loneliness, failure, and illness set in that this reaction shows itself as a part of the general inferiority feeling, perhaps because at these times of strain the need for affection becomes greater. The lack of this affectional response deepens the sense of inferiority. An attitude on the part of many that a craving for love is a sign of weakness adds to the atmosphere in which inferiority flourishes.

The periods of physical stress may or may not coincide with the periods of mental depression and inferiority. Usually the physical demands are most strong following the menstrual period and in the spring of the year.

If an attempt is made to tide over these periods by masturbation or by some type of sublimation such as physical exercise, there is the distinct recognition of this as a substitute. It is not the natural satisfaction and because it is not it ceases to be a satisfaction and becomes another phase of the inferiority feeling.

Establishing a sex union with a man brings with it a lack of security, a feeling that such an arrangement is only a stop gap, and in the end increases rather than decreases the strain.

The whole situation acts as a handicap in meeting men who are matrimonial possibilities. A woman naturally wishes to appear somewhat nonchalant and in doing so often appears cold and sometimes openly antagonistic. She feels that she should not allow a man to know her real feeling of attraction for him. A bachelor who is wary senses her tumult quickly and retreats. His retreat disappoints and adds to the feeling of inferiority.

The problem of association with married men is a more subtle and dangerous one. They are apt to feel that an unmarried woman needs sex companionship and offer it. If a woman can accept this casually it is no doubt one solution, but the problem of her relationship with the wives of the men is rather a treacherous one. Frequently this course adds to the feeling of insecurity rather than detracts from it.

The compensations built up are usually in the form of a career. For the woman who is strongly sensitive to affectional needs there is no satisfaction in that compensation.

The tendency to analyze the reason for accepting or preferring an unmarried experience is largely a process of rationalization and self-justification. This is particularly true if the sense of inferiority is very deep.

The sense of loss as it is related to motherhood is rather vague. Unless one wants to be sentimental about it, it is difficult to estimate such a loss except as it is a part of the general lack of affectional satisfaction. A woman no longer feels that she has failed in her duty to the race if she brings no children into the world.

The maternal impulse is sublimated in interest in younger women who will submit to or welcome guidance and in younger men who will add a male adoration which is at times both comforting and flattering. These younger or less strong persons offer an outlet for the guiding, somewhat dominating force which is so much a part of the maternal instinct.

### *Case 59*

Age 49—In my experience the emotional reaction to the feeling that one is not likely to marry varies from rather keen hurt most of the time and disappointment to one of relief when the situations which would have to be adjusted, such as one's professional work, one's father, financial obligations incurred such as insurance, professional organizations, etc., are thought of. Also when, as a confidential advisor of a good many persons and families one finds one after another facing disillusionment, difficult adjustments, sorrow, reverses and disappointments, the advantages of singleness are quite obvious as well as its shortcomings. Perhaps the feeling is best expressed as a sense of being cheated, of missing experiences which would mean a great deal and of a longing to be wanted and loved intensely.

To be entirely frank, however, "Hope lingers long in the human heart"

(that's not quite a correct quotation) and I must confess I have not entirely "quit struggling" and resigned myself to a life without marriage and children even though common sense tells me that that is what the future may hold. In other words I still have hopes even though most of the time I am so busy I don't spend much time on them and am certainly not doing anything actively to obtain them. A friend suggests a change of environment, friends, clothes and "ideals" (in the sense of too impossible standards for man to reach) as being essentials, but so far nothing has been done. Sometimes I have a vision of myself in the rôle of stepmother and it might be lots of fun.

I think I can honestly say that there is no sense of inferiority about the situation as far as I am concerned. While as a girl I had no intimate friends among boys either in high school or college (and had some rather unhappy experiences as wallflower at parties) I have always had a good many close friends among older men, beginning as a young girl at 11 or 12, which I have thoroughly enjoyed. The fact that they like me has perhaps operated to offset any feeling of inferiority. It has also made problems in a few instances since most of the men are married and the question of getting into a home situation involves of course becoming friends with the wives, too. In some cases our intellectual interests are more nearly on a level than those of the husband and wife. Usually, however, it means that I am a friend of the family including the children, and I thoroughly enjoy the contacts and satisfactions that brings. There have been some difficult emotional situations in one or two instances, however.

In my work allusions are constantly made to the fact that here is "another old maid trying to tell parents how to bring up their children." Fathers especially are apt to feel that way about it. I always admit it and point out that experience in marriage, homemaking and parenthood are great assets to any one in this field. I seldom try to defend my own qualifications since I find by experience that if you have anything to give, the group will discover it and will voice their appreciation and often take back what has been said.

Perhaps also professional success in teaching, which has always given me the greatest satisfaction, and informal human contacts shown by voluntary consultations for help, and continuing friendships with my students and with adults have acted to offset any feeling of inferiority.

Scholastic attainments may have acted in the same way. If Ph.D.'s among women are compensatory for emotional lacks, as some people seem to think, it may have been true in my case since I certainly put much energy into and derived much satisfaction from my graduate work. It was again done almost entirely with men of a very fine type.

A very satisfactory home life where both the father and mother were



genuinely mated and the companionship with the children close especially between the father and daughter may also be a factor.

There have been three unmarried men who have been intimate friends and with whom I played around for varying lengths of time—two of them older than I, the other just my age. Two of them are genuinely interested in me still; one I simply never could work up any emotional feeling towards—we still write each other at infrequent intervals. The other has as bad a mother fixation as I ever saw or rather she has a fixation on him and he has a New England conscience and he says he will never marry. His mother is 77 and will probably live to be 90. In every other way he is the finest type person and would be ideal and I am extremely fond of him. The third has since married and we are still good friends although I only see him at long intervals.

The problem of physical stress was not even brought to my awareness consciously for a number of years, although since I know more about it I can see that a very intense friendship which I had with a very dear friend for about seven years which included some physical aspects was undoubtedly an outlet. The friend was going with the man she afterwards married during the whole seven years which meant that she also was under certain strains. She came from a background which left her with a decided inferiority feeling and with a need for much affection. She is happily married, has a boy seven years old and their home is one of my adopted ones. There has been no continuance of the physical aspects of our friendship since, although we visit each other about once a year.

In the last ten years there has been much more of a problem. I am inclined to think it has been aggravated by reading scientific literature in order to help with problems which were brought to me and by discussions with men and women which make one more conscious of what is being missed. Certain emotional experiences have also undoubtedly aggravated the situation.

The outlets have been reading of biography and romantic novels, music (I sing a good deal in public and play a little), friendships with men, my work and some autoeroticism mostly of the mental type—in the last year physical also.

I do not think that I am ever quite at ease in meeting an unmarried man of my own age. If he is older it is much easier. This may go back to lack of experience with my own age group in adolescence. At that time I was devoted to an older man, a friend of the family, and while we lived in the same place only two years the families were friends (and still are) and we visited back and forth.

I always felt quite superior to the few boys who were in our small town high school—only two in a class of twelve—and never went anywhere so-

cially with them although I used to help them with school work sometimes. Some of the girls are still good friends. Since I didn't learn to dance until later and then not very well I never went to parties in college either. Most of my contacts were with girls since I was in the Home Economics Department. Most of my teachers were men, however, except the specialized H. E. courses. On the whole I would judge that I get more satisfaction from contacts with men than with women, but this may be a rationalization.

Ever since I was a little girl I have loved children, could manage them and earned my extra money during high school and college taking care of children for various families. My own brother is ten years younger and I had quite a little responsibility for him and was very fond of him.

In Maine I taught home management and child training, introduced a baby into the home management house, lived there five years during which we had three different babies. All were adopted—two by a student—and I see them and correspond with the oldest who is now ten. There are a number of other children of friends and students with whom I keep in touch and to whom I am "aunty."

In times past I have considered adopting a youngster but could never decide that it would be fair to the child since he needs a real home and a father and since there would be only fragments of my time and energy available.

Undoubtedly this urge and interest influenced my choice of Home Economics in the first place, the introduction of courses on children, the baby in the home management house, and the choice of a graduate field in child psychology (my master's was in nutrition) where I had contact with many children at varying levels. In the same way desire for a home and family probably motivates my interest in families and their problems.

Perhaps all of the above represents sublimation but there is still a deep need which has not been met and which at times makes life seem quite profitless and stale. Most of the time there are so many demands on my time and energy by my job, my homemaking and other interests that I do not think about it and am quite satisfied.

In philosophizing about getting married my favorite quotation is "When what is available is not desirable and what is desirable is not available" what's one to do?

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